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ABSTRACT

The papers in this book focus on the strategies, practices, theory, or research related to emergent literacy, elementary and secondary reading, literature, philosophy, affective issues, school improvement, teacher training, and assessment that are related in important ways to issues in past, present and future reading education. Papers in the book are: "Why Do We Have to Read This Anyway?" (Thomas H. Estes); "Toward a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference" (Donna E. Alvermann); "We're All in This Together: Difference, Pedagogy, and Critical Literacy" (Patrick Shannon); "Critics and Workers--Lessons on Fame and Pain" (Rick Erickson); "Some Funny Things Happened on My Way to the Forum" (Wayne Otto); "Call to Forum: A Dream about Gatto's 'Dumbing Us Down'" (Thomas Cloer, Jr.); "Effects of Anchored Instruction on Preservice Teachers' Knowledge Acquisition and Problem Solving" (Victoria J. Risko); "Explorers of the Universe: An Action Research Scientific Literacy Project" (Marino C. Alvarez); "Who Taught You How To Do That? Insights into Literacy Learning in a Student-Centered Nongraded Classroom" (Mona W. Matthews); "Results of Collaboration between College and Schools with a Parent Involvement Reading Program" (Shara B. Curry); "The Effects of Read-Along Tapes on the Reading Comprehension of Middle School Students" (Thomas Cloer, Jr. and Gail R. Denton); "Authentic Assessment and Literacy Instruction: Exactly Where Are We?" (Karen Ford and others); "Creating an Informal Reading-Thinking Inventory" (Anthony V. Manzo and others); "Cultural Values as Depicted in Hispanic Contemporary Fiction Books Written for Children" (Nelly Hecker and Bob W. Jerrolds); "Not Newbery but National Issues for Developing Higher Level Literacy" (Louise M. Tomlinson); "Linking Literature-Based Reading of Today with Literature-Based Instruction in the Past" (Janet A. Miller); and "A Participant-Observer's Notes Regarding a Problems Court Session at the American Reading Forum, 1994" (Wayne Otto and others). (RS)

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From The Editors

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Past volumes of the American Reading Forum Yearbook addressed issues related to a variety of literacy concerns. With the theme, LINKING LITERACY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE, papers in this volume focus on strategies, practices, theory or research related to emergent literacy, elementary and secondary reading, literature, philosophy, affective issues, school improvement, teacher training, assessment, and other topics that are related in important ways to issues in past, present and future reading education.

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Volume XV, 1995

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Why Do We Have to Read This Anyway?

Thomas H. Estes

Every graduate student we train in research methods learns (and soon forgets) the basic assumptions that lie behind the statistical tests they will conduct on data. One of these, for example, is the assumption that the variable under consideration is distributed normally within the population—that is, measures of the variable, taken over the entire population, would graph perfectly onto the famous bell-shaped curve. And that's only one important assumption. Consider the related assumption:

> Tests on population means are based on a structural model which assumes that $\sigma_a^2 = \sigma_b^2$. Moderate departures from the hypothesis that $\sigma_a^2 = \sigma_b^2$ do not seriously affect the accuracy of the decision reached by means of the *t* test. In more technical language, the test is robust with respect to moderate departures from the hypothesis of homogeneity of variance (Winer, 1971, p.37).

Thus, tests of differences in mean scores depend on relatively stable variance. But, I wonder, isn't change in variance the point of instruction? That is, don't we teach to improve every student's performance and to make every student competent? If so, why do we analyze results for differences in means? Why not test for reductions in variance instead? Sure, we would like mean scores to rise, but wouldn't we also like our instruction to reduce disparity among students? I'd like to suggest that we are so focused on differences in mean scores in research that we forget to ask a more interesting question: Does our instruction have any effect at all on variance? Since we rarely if ever test for differences in variance, except as a prelude to checking for differences in means, how would we know?

Actually, the quote from Winer came to me in a dream recently, along with a bunch of questions I couldn't really answer. I am not a statistician, despite these dreams, but I want to know: Don't we make the same claims for homogeneity of variance in classrooms when we make instructional decisions of what to teach and how to teach it? When we choose to teach everyone from the same book in content areas, aren't we assuming something about the variance in a classroom with respect to variables relevant to reading that book? Aren't we assuming that the variance itself is low in that classroom and homogeneous between classrooms? Our research is fooling us. How much do departures from these assumptions affect the results of our decisions? Is the validity of our instructional decisions and our research really as robust as we might claim? I am not sure.

There is no Bartlett's test (Winer, 1971) to settle these questions with respect to instruction. Bartlett's test tests for homogeneity of variance across populations, which we never have done. Statistics have their limits, and they are severe. So I'd like to pose the questions a little differently, in the form of a true story surrounding a real life event that occurred to me. This is not a dream.

Why Do We Have to Read This Stuff?

A friend of mine, Patsy, came to me recently with a question that her child's teacher had posed for her. The teacher, a white female, had observed that when the class was studying the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, the minority children in the room (some African Americans, some Asian Americans) seemed disconnected from the conversation. My friend's son is in that group. It was as if the minority students felt that none of this period of history had anything to do with them. My friend's question to me was "How can a teacher make a connection to minority children if they know little or nothing of their culture?" I'm fairly sure that "they" refers to the teacher, but I think the ambiguity of the question is worth preserving—*they* could refer to both the teacher and the children.

I want to share my answer with you because it relates quite directly to a central issue in reading that doesn't get discussed often enough. The issue is revealed by every child who asks the question, "Why do we have to read this stuff anyway?" (Perhaps some of our research attention should focus on that one!).

This was my response to the question posed by my friend:

Dear Patsy,

Your question poses a dilemma. On the one hand, children of different races share very much with each other culturally. But, the problem for the teacher arises in this case, I believe, because the legendary Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock are white heroes, much more homogeneous than the classroom the teacher faces.

I have a question for you, and for your son's teacher. Why do we teach about the pilgrims? They were not even pilgrims in the usual sense of "pilgrimage," a voyage to a religious shrine. True, the voyage of the Mayflower was motivated in part by religion. To set the record straight, these people were originally known as "founders" or "forefathers." They were given the name Pilgrims in 1820, two centuries after Plymouth Rock was founded. By that time more legend than fact was "known" of them. What we do know is that they were headed for Virginia, where Jamestown was a successful first colony, thinking they could get in on the action and escape persecution at the same time. One-third of the Pilgrims were English Separatist who had fled England to the Netherlands in search of religious freedom for themselves before fleeing further on the Mayflower. The other passengers signed onto the voyage for business reasons, to protect and advance the interests of the company that financed the trip. They were not excellent sailors, and thus poor navigation combined with a storm at sea to put them a little north of their destination of Virginia. So they wound up at what they then called Plymouth Rock.

Their story forms one of America's myths; a culture's stories tell about its past. Myths always include heroes. The Pilgrims were and are an inspiration to others for whom perseverance and self-reliance are important. Who can fail to picture that first Thanksgiving? Friendly natives and newcomers enjoying together the bounty of a "new" world.

Less well known than the myth, for the original copy was misplaced over the years, the Mayflower Compact (signed by 41 white males) was an agreement for self-governance that became the foundation of the democracy we live in. (I identify the 41 signers by sex and race to emphasize that the right to a voice in government is an issue we're still working on). There aren't many women in our Senate yet, very few women governors of states. Times change slowly.

Things change, things remain the same. It is these facts that connect every child in the room to the story of the Pilgrims.

Furthermore, I'll assert that a black student and a white teacher both have much in common culturally with the Pilgrims: They look forward to the *same Thanksgiving holiday and they are probably both Christians. Even if not, they share the evolved ethic of the early settlers of North America, including a commitment to religious freedom, including the freedom to have no religion.*

The ancestors of your son and his teacher probably both came to America long after Plymouth Rock, though your son knows his were on a slave ship and the white teacher denies that hers were on a prison ship. Maybe not, but today what's the difference? Part of the basic idea of America is that ancestry is not to be held against (or in favor) of an individual. That is part of the truth in the myth of the Pilgrims. They risked their lives for a principle. And in that truth lies the place we might try to get kids to connect to what we're teaching. Does a black child need to feel disconnected from contemporary culture because his/her ancestors were not European? I hardly think so, but the child may not at first see any connection. Does a white child have more right to America's heritage? Not if the principles of freedom that guided the Mayflower have any validity today, which I say they do. The art of teaching this facet of our history lies in showing these fourth graders why it's worth studying. It's not really to know who the Pilgrims were, but to know who they are—black, white, male, female, whatever. You know—Americans.

I want to suggest a few questions that a teacher might use in preparation for teaching anything. Questions that can be shared with the children, who are asking the questions in the first place:

1. *What's the value in this?*

2. *What's the value to the learner in knowing about this?*

3. *What values will I teach in teaching this?*

I am in hopes that by asking these questions, your son's teacher and all her students might find a values perspective to everything they read and study in content areas. I appreciate your letting me be so long-winded about it, but as you see, it's not an easy question you raise.

Sincerely,

Tom

My sympathy goes out to the child in this story. I think I was there too. I didn't know why we studied the Pilgrims. The fault in most of the information learners encounter in their reading in school is that the information is presented by textbooks in such neutral, distilled terms that the reader can't ever quite get what's to care about here. What I'd like to see us research more carefully is how caring and comprehension go together. Edmund Bolles (1988) has suggested that memory and caring go together like this (I'm paraphrasing a little):

- People remember what they understand;
- They understand what they pay attention to;
- They pay attention to what they care about.

That's why the little kid seems disconnected. Not just him, but a lot of kids in that room. What's to care about?

Things to Care About

I once had a child call me over to his desk to say, "Can you help me? I can read this (pointing to his social studies book) but I can't find the story." At the time, I was much younger, but I thought, of course not. It's not a story book. But years later I realized he was pointing something out to me that I wasn't hearing, helping me see something I couldn't see. He was telling me that without the story, all that information was useless to him. He helped me see that history is nothing but story, and if the story is left out, there is no history. Look at how the word is spelled. Here's a way to remember that: The last five letters in the word *history* are *story*.

Reading in science and mathematics and language arts and health and foreign language—all reading—needs to be set in the context of a conversation in which points of value arise, things to care about. Could that conversation itself be the object of our research? For example, we might have about a million conversations in science and math about the differences between what our senses and our intuitions tell us and what actually is. How many people study science and math with the consciousness that the purpose of studying these subjects is to keep our senses from telling us what is not true? (Anyone can see that sun circles the earth, but only a fool believes it). Then the reading and study in science and math can serve those points. In content area reading, the reading is not the point, but there is a point to the reading. We ought to pay attention to those points in our research and our teaching.

At the close of one of Barbara Kingsolver's (1991) novels, called *Animal Dreams*, I came across a paragraph that seems perfectly appropriate here:

"You learn to read so you can identify the reality in which you live, so that you can become a protagonist . . . rather than a spectator" (p. 326).

I think we're going to have to defend literacy in the rest of our careers. It is under assault. Students increasingly will demand reasons for having to read what we require them to read.

In the classroom I mentioned where they were studying the Pilgrims, the teacher offered extra credit for a paper the students could write about what it was like to cross the sea to America on the Mayflower. One young man took some liberty with the story as you and I heard it, but no more liberty than we take with our history, perhaps. With his and his parents' permission, I want you to read it:

> *A long time ago many black people came to the New World to find freedom near Jamestown Rock. The people were strong people and they had shiny swords. They were nice to the Indians and gave them food. They gave them lots of food and some swords. Nobody wanted to massacre nobody. The black people built a fort. One day they found they had lots of food. The Indians said, "We have lots of food, too." They have a big dinner together. Then they made the United States flag. Twenty-five Indians and twenty-five black people put the stars on the flag. They gave it to the other settlers. Everybody was happy ever after.*

What a perfect motto Barbara Kingsolver's comment provides. Just the answer for the young man who wrote this essay. It also answers my friend's young son, who asked, "Why do we have to read this anyway?" All I'm asking of us is that we think through our answer to that question.

I want to close with one more thought on the question of variance. There is variance and there is the mean. One focuses on difference, the other on similarity. Our research and, more importantly, our instruction would do well to recognize both.

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Toward a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference

Donna E. Alvermann

Teacher educators and researchers in the field of literacy continue to demonstrate an interest in learning about what *can be* as well as *what is* (Alvermann & Guthrie, 1995). Nowhere is this interest more apparent than in the literature dealing with literacy practices. Until recently, the empirical-analytic frame for studying literacy practices has dominated the field. With its focus on measuring the effectiveness of reading instruction, the empirical-analytic frame has viewed practice largely from what van Manen (1977) labels "a no-change, status-quo model of society" (p. 208). The shortcomings of this frame for studying literacy instruction are bound up in its preoccupation with a technical orientation toward research and practice (Phelan, forthcoming). Such an orientation expects teachers to implement knowledge generated by university-based researchers. Applying knowledge derived by outsiders to problems experienced in insiders' classrooms has not worked particularly well in the past (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1989), and it appears to hold even less promise for the future (Mosenthal, 1993).

In contrast to the empirical-analytic frame, a hermeneutic- phenomenological frame views practice as being tied to what is understandable by teachers and students who communicate and make sense together. The emphasis of researchers working within the hermeneutic-phenomenological frame is on making visible the educational experiences, actions, and changing perceptions of both teachers and learners. According to van Manen (1977), "from the perspective of hermeneutics there are no such things as stimuli, responses, or measurable behaviors; instead, there are encounters, lifeworlds, and meanings, which invite investigation" (p. 214). Asking students and teachers to communicate what they understand about their encounters with print and meaning-making activities in content literacy classrooms has been the focus of a growing body of research conducted in the hermeneutic-phenomenological frame over the past five years (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995).

However, critics of the hermeneutic-phenomenological frame for studying literacy practices claim that it lacks the critical consciousness needed to gain insights into the relationships of power. This view of power is recognizable in the work of Freire (1971) and others who concern themselves with the "interpersonal and social conditions necessary for genuine self-understanding, emancipatory learning, and critical consciousness" (van Manen, 1977, p. 221). Race, class, gender, and any number of other subject identities provide the substance for research that views literacy practices within a critical frame. Although this frame is the basis for numerous liberatory pedagogies that stand in opposition to oppression, it has its shortcomings.

The writings of feminist theorists, such as Gore (1993), Orner (1992), and Weiler (1991), offer valuable insights into some of these shortcomings, including how Freirean and other self-proclaimed liberatory pedagogies can themselves reproduce relations of domination and oppression. Writing on the potential of feminist pedagogy to address some of the problems associated with these self-proclaimed liberatory pedagogies, Weiler (1991) cited three areas that need considering if such pedagogies are to be enriched and expanded:

> The first of these concerns the role and authority of the teacher; the second addresses the epistemological question of the source of the claims for knowledge and truth in personal experience and feeling; the last, emerging from challenges by women of color and postmodernist feminist theorists, raises the question of difference (p. 459).

Role and Authority of the Teacher

Within a feminist frame for studying literacy practices, a tension is felt between the need to live up to institutionally imposed authority of one's university, college, or school (e.g., the authority to give grades) and the need to be a co-learner with one's students rather than a dispenser of knowledge. This tension is often complicated by a set of discourses, or ways of being in the world (Gee, 1990), which operate in institutions of higher learning and kindergarten through twelfth-grade schools, and which also position teachers as figures of authority held accountable for meeting the standards set forth by their colleagues or others in authority over them. For example, Heald (1992) describes the situation this way:

> The existence of a set of discourses which define teacher/student and impact on my selfhood mean that I am not free to create the position "teacher" in my image. My experience suggests that my "success" as teacher will depend in part on my ability to be recognized as a particular kind of educational subject. (p. 142)

The contradictions that arise from pursuing someone else's image of the "successful" teacher are complicated even further when one considers the paradox that Treichler (1986) uncovered in her review of the literature on classroom interaction patterns. As Treichler has written,

> Studies of teachers find that, at every educational level, women tend to generate more class discussion, more interaction, more give-and-take between students and teacher and among students. In direct relation to the degree to which this is true, (1) students evaluate these classes as friendlier, livelier, less authoritarian, and more conducive to learning, and (2) students judge the teacher to be less competent in her subject matter. Thus behaviors judged as traditionally male—a lecture format, little student give-and-take, the transmission of a given body of content, little attention to process—seem also to signal professional competence. (p. 86)

In terms of feminist pedagogy, then, the role and authority of the teacher are anything but clear. On the one hand, teachers are supposed to have authority; on the other hand, how they choose to exercise that authority is often questioned or held in low esteem, especially if they are female. Nonetheless, as Weiler (1991) has carefully pointed out, feminists' explorations of authority (compared to Freire's) are much richer and more direct in their treatment of the contradictions teachers experience.

Personal Experience as a Source of Knowledge

Underlying the hermeneutic-phenomenological, critical, and feminist frames of literacy practice is the assumption that a common experience is needed if one is to work toward school- and university-based collaborative research (Hollingsworth, 1992), intellectual freedom in class discussion (Guzzetti, in press), and social change in general (Shannon, 1989). This common experience has been grounded traditionally in feelings or emotions, which in turn are thought to be central to consciousness raising, political analysis, and social action.

In particular, Freirean and feminist educators have looked to personal experience and feeling as sources of knowledge. This approach to meaning making and social change in literacy practice is not without its problems, however. For example, one such problem identified by Weiler (1991) is the "danger that the expression of strong emotion can be simply cathartic and can deflect the need for action to address the underlying causes of that emotion" (p. 463). Critiques of personal narratives as teachers' ways of knowing underscore the cathartic nature of this form of discourse and point out the dangers inherent in such discourse.

A related problem in claiming personal experience and feeling as sources of knowledge is the danger of falling victim to institutional dehumanization, or, in Lorde's (1984) terms, letting the "the oppressor within" detract us from creating new ways of being in the world:

> For we have, built into us, old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are the result of those structures. (p. 123)

Conscious of Lorde's argument that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," (p. 123), Neilsen (in press) proposes a different approach. In brief, Neilsen urges literacy educators to resist practices in institutional hierarchies that devalue multiple ways of knowing, maintain the status quo, and silence whatever possibilities may exist for inventing literacy practices that depend on personal experience as a source of knowledge.

The Question of Difference

Important as the concept of personal experience is to literacy teaching and learning, it should not be viewed in an uncritical manner, especially since viewing personal experience as a unitary concept is as untenable as viewing the category "woman" from an essentialist or universal perspective. The personal experiences of women of color have long argued against any such essentialist view of woman. In the following quotation taken from African American women's experiences in the Combahee River Collective, the interlocking oppressions of sexism and racism demonstrate clear differences in women's experiences:

> As children we realized that we were different from boys and that we were treated differently. For example, we were told in the same breath to be quiet both for the sake of being "ladylike" and

> to make us less objectionable in the eyes of white people. (Smith, 1983, p. 274)

Challenging racist and sexist assumptions requires one to acknowledge the social construction of gender and race. It also requires a closer look at the social construction of subjectivity and the unstable nature of the self (Weiler, 1991). Subjectivity, as Weedon (1987) explains, refers to the thoughts and emotions (both conscious and unconscious) of the individual and the individual's different ways of understanding his or her relation to the world. Unlike the humanist perspective on subjectivity, which presupposes it to be fixed and coherent, Weedon (cited in Luke & Gore, 1992) takes the poststructuralist view that "a subjectivity...is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (p. 79). This notion of a self that is perpetually changing and often contradictory has implications for classroom literacy practices that revolve around discussions of assigned reading materials.

Unexamined assumptions about differences in students' motivation to speak out in peer-led discussions of assigned texts have been at the heart of two recent investigations by Alvermann (in press) and Guzzetti (in press). In each case, despite a teacher's good intentions, demands for student voice went awry. Classrooms, as well as the teachers and students who inhabit them, are located in profoundly different contexts that vary according to histories, ideologies, and identities. In even the most democratic classrooms, changing power relations, unexamined assumptions about what it means to call for student voice, and a multitude of subjectivities perpetually under construction may simply make it unsafe for students to speak what is on their minds.

A Concluding Thought

Feminist critiques of essentialist and universal claims that overlook real differences in teachers' and students' literacy practices explore issues left unaddressed by empirical-analytical, hermeneutic-phenomenological, and Freirean frames of reference. Such critiques have the potential to expand and elaborate upon liberatory pedagogies that for too long have treated difference as something to be denied or written off as unimportant. Recognizing the value of people's different standpoints adds to the complexity of understanding literacy practices. Still, it is difficult to imagine that in striving to reach *what can be*, rather than *accepting what is*, one would expect anything but complex issues to surface. What is fortunate is that feminist critiques provide a way to analyze this complexity.

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We're All In This Together: Difference, Pedagogy, and Critical Literacy

Patrick Shannon

Each year I face several hundred undergraduate students who look and act a lot like I did when I was at university. I don't mean that they are covered with flannel or hair or that they are beer-soaked. Rather, they are eager, very white, and a little in awe of university life. They want to be teachers—most want that so badly that they can almost taste the chalk dust, hear the lunch money, and feel the warmth of thirty students in a too small classroom. Most are earnest and willing to consider any topic that can be related to teaching, children, or schooling. They even endure the din of professors' voices telling them endlessly without the slightest hint of hypocrisy not to lecture. At times, they seem to stare back at me like deer into oncoming headlights.

Those eyes ask me to do the impossible—to make them teachers, to make them understand children, and to make them integrate themselves into the community of teachers at their first job. They expect me to share *the* secret that will do all this for them. This is a terrifying request. At best, I hope to help them prepare themselves to teach, to understand, to integrate. I tell them this, and I am certain that I demonstrate that I do not possess a secret that will make them teachers. This is not a dereliction of duty on my part. It is not incompetence. No one can honestly answer their request. These students must construct themselves as teachers through consideration of their histories, their literacies, and their experiences. That is, they must create their own teacher identities.

I am not without influence, however. After all, I am a text they read; I dredge up their histories in new ways; and I sponsor experiences in which they can engage. I am only one among many factors, however, and a fairly minor one at that. My challenge, then, is to attempt to mean something in the lives of those students in order that my concerns might affect their identities and those identities that they will influence when they teach. I realize that this sounds arrogant on my part. However, it is the arrogance that all teachers must have. We all think that we have something to offer our students, and we all intend to change their lives in both subtle and profound ways.

Difference

Like many of my students, I was the first in my family to attend college; I was job oriented by necessity; and I came from a fairly limited environment. Because of these shared factors, I listen with knowing ears when students talk about schooling and its possibilities. Most believe that they will return to their home towns, or at least nearby towns, in order to teach in schools much like the ones they attended. There, they expect that they will fit into the school environment and continue to teach as they were taught, perhaps helping other families to send their children to college or to become successfully employed. Moreover, they believe that their students will look, talk, and behave as they remember they did when they were younger. Being job oriented, they expect college professors to teach them what to do on a daily basis to make their classroom lives orderly, routine, and enjoyable—all the qualities they perceived in the lives of the teachers who taught them. From personal experience, I know that these predictions and hopes will not always match the realities of their future teaching lives and of schools.

I found this out when I began as a kindergarten teacher at an inner city school in Rochester, New York. Although several of the teachers were first generation college graduates themselves, I found that few of them believed that their students were college material or likely to be successful in other endeavors. Although all those teachers worked hard at their jobs, we seemed to be losing the struggle to help our students learn much of the school curriculum. And although I was a scant 20 miles from where I grew up, few of the students in my class looked, talked, or acted like me. Not only did they appear different from me, they seemed different from each other. We had boys and girls, of course, destitute, poor, working class, and lower middle class, African Americans, Vietnamese, Europeans, European Americans, Haitians, Asian Americans, and Puerto Ricans, Muslims, Catholics, Jews, non-believers and Protestants. Some were smarter, others were faster, and still others had braces on their legs. They spoke English, French, Greek, Vietnamese, and Spanish. All of them had different backgrounds—some had been to preschool, others had been in foster care. Two years was the longest anyone had lived at his or her current address. One had shot his mother accidentally, several were refugees, two had been molested, and none was a monolingual, small town white male who was making a middle class wage for the first time, had serious doubts about religion, and had never flown in a plane, ridden on a train, or sailed on a ship.

When I tell this story, the variety of humanity startles many of my university students who seldom think of elementary school students, let alone kindergartners, as real people with real lives. As we talk about the variety among the people in their own communities and the classrooms they will inhabit, we invariably begin to explore our views on difference, representation, and multiculturalism as well as less polite ideas about deviance, defiance, and maladjustment. These discussions are difficult because we must question our teachers' and our own beliefs and understandings, and we challenge much of our taken-for-granted knowledge about schooling. It is not easy to question your history and your assumptions about life. However, these discussions are also fruitful because they force and allow us to address what I consider to be a central question of teaching—how do we wish to live together in and out of school?

By asking this question, we take a step toward negotiating our existence with people who appear different or atypical to us. We are presented with the opportunity to question our definitions of ourselves as "normal" and to see that such categories are more statements of power than of biological, historical or even moral fact. For example, when I ask university students to fill in default values for what it means to be a normal American, they provide answers which sometimes even surprise themselves. Although there is modest disagreement (regional, ethnic and religious pride), they describe a white male Protestant, who is able bodied (thin and athletic) and minded (a school graduate), a heterosexual, well off (but not rich), with two parents, and from the northeast. When they quibble about the normal American's ethnic decent, I ask them to name royalty from England, Thailand or the Netherlands. They know Di and Chuck, his brothers and sister, their children and no one from the other countries. We are Anglo Saxons by media default. After this exercise, they seldom argue. When asked to compare this "normal American" with their reference to themselves as normal (the point from which they judge the difference of others), we have some surprised looks, some laughs, and some anger. When we consider who benefits from this default definition of American normality which is in most, if not all, of our heads, they stare at me without a twinkle in their eyes.

Within the question of finding ways to live together, our exploration of our positions on difference requires us to consider our stances on the possibilities of harmonious living among the diversity of our classrooms. Most students believe that teachers must be tolerant of difference, if harmony is the goal. "If all participants in the classroom could just learn to tolerate each other, things would be fine," they say. However on further reflection, we recognize that this is an impossibility because tolerance implies unequal power relationships among participants. Tolerance means overcoming one's own resistance to that which is distasteful or antagonistic. While I, as the epitome of "the normal American," can be graciously tolerant of women, people of color, gays and lesbians, disabled, old or young, people who speak languages or dialectics other than my own, pagans, the poor or wealthy, orphans or single-parented children, and non-New Englanders (all of whom I may find distasteful), they must live by rules in school and laws and social mores in society arranged to benefit me, that is, "normal Americans." Others cannot be tolerant, rather they must submit (or resist as "outlaws") because they do not have the power of choice. After our discussion, we conclude that tolerance will not bring harmony in or out of schools—only mystifying oppression—and that we must do better than tolerance.

In order to work toward harmony, we must affirm individuals' and social groups' right to be and remain different from one another without assumption of hierarchy. That is, we must expose and oppose the concept of normality as a frame of reference for judging difference, and we must stop fooling ourselves that Americans can share the same set of characteristics and values without violence to the lives and cultures of most people who inhabit America. What we need to do is to acknowledge our differences and work toward collective explanations of how people differ, where their differences come from, and how we can live and work together *with* (not despite) those differences. Moreover, we must ask ourselves why American institutions (schools included) are organized to eliminate rather than to explore difference.

Pedagogy

By pushing past our idyllic memories of our schooling, we find a time and place to discuss pedagogy;

> "the integration of particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, and evaluation purposes and methods. All of these aspects of educational practice come together in the realities of what happens in classrooms. Together they organize a view of how a teacher's work within an institutional context specifies a particular vision of what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment" (Simon, 1992, p. 140).

That is, by recognizing that our predictions about schooling may not be accurate, particularly in our assumption that we will be teaching people who are "just like us," we expand our sense of what being job oriented means. Of course, we study curricular and instructional practices which seem to direct teachers' efforts on a daily basis, but we also recognize that we must study the politics of human relations within those curricular and instructional practices and frameworks.

To discuss how we wish to live together in pedagogical terms, we must specify how we will go about engendering those relationships on a daily, even hourly, basis. Discussions of pedagogy and difference force us to investigate where we have stood on the issue of difference, where we stand now, and where we hope to stand in the future. We explore our pasts, our current beliefs, assumptions, and actions, and our hope for the future. For many, myself included, these deliberations cause great anguish as we struggle to come to grips with differences which do and will surround us. During the time we share in class, all but a few search for ways to live together in greater harmony.

I am uniquely situated to help preservice teachers consider these points because I am assigned to teach literacy education courses. Because we define literacy broadly—reading and writing the word and the world—we fall naturally into discussion of pedagogy and difference. We start with questions about school structure—for whom are schools in general and literacy instruction in particular designed? We look at grouping: by age into grades, by number into classes within grades, and by scope and sequence of goals into ability groups within classes. We examine textbooks to see which topics are addressed, then, what utility those topics offer, and whose experiential backgrounds are tapped by the examples. We brainstorm the rules from past classrooms concerning conduct, seating arrangements, and uses of time and space. In short, we attempt to induce the assumptions of traditional elementary school pedagogy and its association to difference. At each step we think about whose "story" is being told through the curriculum, whose experience is being reproduced through the rules, and whose past is being rewarded by the organizational structure.

During and after these explorations, some students get angry, some get cynical, and all seem less optimistic about how their teaching lives will affect their students. They relate stories from their past about grouping, textbooks, and rules which significantly modify their previous confidence in their predictions about schooling. They tell about demotions from one reading group to a lower one for conduct against the deportment codes. They discuss what fear of testing did to them and their friends. They talk about the stigma of referrals to special services. And they begin to identify how the structure of schooling, curriculum, materials, and classrooms set up some social groups to win and other social groups to lose right from the beginning until the very end of schooling.

Typically, at this point nearly all of us recognize that schools and literacy education are organized to promote a specific set of values, normal American values. However, we begin to split company at this point. A significant portion of students believe schooling toward normal American values is "a good thing" because it gives everyone an opportunity to succeed upon graduation. They assume that if individuals can "rise" and accept these standard values, then they can be rewarded by a society that works as a meritocracy according to those values. However, others object to this "biased organization" of schooling as unfair and they point to similar biases outside of schools in housing, employment, and health care. Their objections range from modest concerns for adjustments in order to bring about more equal opportunity to complete rejection of traditional school organization and its implied pedagogy.

Because I am interest in changing the organization of schooling so that we can live together in and out of school with justice and fairness, I push the analysis of the structure of schools and literacy programs from contemplation to action. What can we *do* about the injustices we have experienced and identified? This question moves us on two fronts. First, what are alternative, fair school programs and classroom structures? How can schools be organized so that they do not divide in order to conquer? How can literacy programs know the literacies that students bring to school? And how can we stop all the biased competition in the daily activities of the classroom? Here, we investigate the State's framework for language arts which Susan Lytle and Pennsylvania teachers negotiated during the late 1980s (Lytle & Botel, 1990). This Framework asks educators to consider whole language and process approaches to literacy from preschool to secondary school. During our discussions of the Framework, we prepare to act differently when teaching—to seek multi-aged classes, to fight against reified goals in scope and sequence formats, to group cooperatively by interest, to struggle against the biased competition among social groups disguised as ability grouping, and to negotiate rules for learners in order to establish learning communities to increase our students' stake in classroom and school life.

The second front opened up by the call for action against biased structures in schooling concerns the question of agency. That is, we address the pessimistic euphemism, "You can't fight city hall." Analyses of the structure of schooling can and often do leave educators with feelings that they are pawns in someone else's game of chess. They begin to doubt their abilities to act independently of the "invisible hand" that seems to direct schooling. Although they see the biases and they wish that the biases were not there, they doubt their abilities to make much of a difference in "the system." This doubt is exacerbated by their initial trips to area schools where they seldom find teachers working toward the Pennsylvania Framework, and they find the biases we have identified in our investigations very much in evidence because, as the cooperating teaches often tell them, "That's how all children are taught to read." If left unchallenged, this doubt begins to erode their interest in "doing things differently" at all, and they shy away from the struggle toward alternative pedagogy altogether.

These feelings of pessimism and fear, of course, work to perpetuate the structural biases and privileges enjoyed by "normal Americans" in an out of classrooms, and they are potentially devastating to the possibility of change. Accordingly we confront these feelings head on because I believe that in order to bring about change, first you must believe change is possible and necessary. To begin, we write autobiographies of our learning to read and write. We talk with our parents and grandparents, look at the artifacts our elders have saved, and reflect on our days in literacy lessons. We share these personal histories in class in order to see commonalties and differences across classmates. We learn that parts of our histories are not personal at all, but rather are shared by many. Other parts, we learn, are unique. For example, many conclude that they learned to enjoy reading at home, but all learn that opinions about reading groups depend on whether you viewed them from the top or bottom group. Most express a continuing fear of writing for any audience beyond teachers.

Through this sharing, we begin to question how the official histories of learning to read traditionally projected by methods textbooks, teachers colleges, and schools could be so different than the collective histories we have constructed. To help us situate our concern, we read and discuss *The Struggle to Continue* (Shannon, 1990), a text which reveals the human intentions behind traditional practices and introduces educators who endeavored to teach with progressive, unbiased intentions. By learning about ourselves, our connections with a radical past, and the historical precedents for the Pennsylvania Framework, we begin to recognize ourselves as historical beings capable of "making" history by struggling personally and collectively against personal and structural biased schooling.

Critical Literacy

These two fronts become one for us when we start to explore critical literacy for ourselves and our students. Critical literacy and critical literacy education pushes the definition of literacy beyond the traditional decoding or encoding of words in order to reproduce the meaning of text and society until it becomes a means for understanding one's own history and culture, for making connections between our lives and histories and those of others and the social structure, and for acting on this new knowledge to bring about justice, equality, and harmony. Like all other forms of literacy, critical literacy is political. It asks us to consider the politics of the authors we read and to decide whose side we are on when we write. Moreover it expands literacy because we not only read and write (make sense of and from) the alphabet in connected text, but we read other types of symbols embedded in social practice and institutions (e.g., schools, grouping, textbook, etc.), we also write other types of symbols in our social actions in order to determine their contributions or challenges to the social, economic, and political status quo.

Through our discussions of pedagogy, difference, and agency, we begin to consider critical literacy. Our negotiated stance on these issues requires us to be critically literate, reading the textbooks, practices and organization of traditional schooling and writing alternatives based on justice, equality, and harmony through the exploration of difference. When reading the past (e.g., *The Struggle to Continue*), we find critical literacy has a distinguished history in America—from discussions of genocide against Native Americans at the turn of the century in Quincy, Massachusetts, to student initiated local health cooperatives in McDonald County, Missouri in the 1920s, to the citizenship schools for enfranchisement of Blacks during the 1950s and 1960s, to the "rethinking of Columbus" in 1992. Those examples from the past give us ideas for our future teaching and give us hope that schooling and teaching can be different.

However, it is not enough for us to become critically literate. We must be prepared to help others toward this practice. This means that we must imbed the alternative methods of teaching we develop surrounding the Pennsylvania Framework within a critical pedagogical stance and to reinterpret those methods according to our explicitly political intent. For example, when helping students to find their voice through their writing in order that they can tell their stories, we recognize that these voices and stories are not an individual's alone. Rather they are the voices and stories of different social groups of which this individual is a member. He or she does not speak, write, or tell his or her own story, but social groups speak to each other through individuals' words and actions. In this way, the voices and stories become texts for classes to read in order to explore types of difference, their origins, and points of similarity on which we can figure out how to live and work together.

Most of the alternative invitations and curricular components proposed and practiced in service of the Pennsylvania Framework—from extensive use of children's literature, to the writing process, to the building of literate communities—can be reinterpreted so that they help us to influence students' identities in ways that enable them to read their own lives and histories better, to identify similarities and differences between and among other students and themselves and connections between those lives and the social structure of schooling and society, and to write new texts and actions that will challenge the inequalities of schooling, the hypocrisy of tolerance, and the injustices of the social status quo.

Through our efforts to become better teachers, we struggle with our pasts, our beliefs, and our actions. We become much better informed about the stakes of our jobs, or soon-to-be jobs. And we come to grips with the personal responsibility we have, not to just stand by silently while schooling works against the majority of students who walk through the classroom door. We no longer look to others to tell us how or what to teach. We reconstruct our identities as teachers (of course these identities will be reconstructed continuously as we continue to teach) so that we are positioned to work with our students as we consider the question, "How do we wish to live together?" We come to recognize that we must address this question daily in our theories, curriculum and practice, because, if harmony is our goal, then we are all in this together.

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Critics and Workers— Lessons on Fame and Pain

Rick Erickson

I've learned some things in the last three months. My lessons began at the Call for Forum 1994, continued for me at the early February, 1995 Colorado Reading Council State meeting in Denver, and concluded at the mid-February 1995 Association for Teacher Educators annual meeting in Detroit. I think I can best explain what I've learned with questions and some discussion. Here is the first lesson.

Question: "Professor, do you want fame?"

Answer: "Sure, why not?"

Discussion: Become a school critic and write books like John Gatto (1992) *Dumbing Us Down* or Myron Lieberman (1993) *Public Education: An Autopsy*. Better yet, get invited to speak to large audiences like psycholinguist Frank Smith (1985) *Reading Without Nonsense*. Smith told teachers at the Colorado Council State IRA meeting that public schools are basically flawed and going down like the Titanic. The only logical response is to jump off. "Save yourself," said Frank, "Schools are beyond help." He got a standing ovation.

A sure way to fame, even better than writing a book or speaking at conferences is to host a radio talk show. On the February 2, 1995 G. Gordon Liddy noon hour talk show, a caller asked for advice. "What can I do, as a parent, to protect my three children as America goes down the toilet?". G. G. L. replied, with glee. "It's easy. The first thing you must do is take your children out of the public schools and put them in a good private school." He wailed about the ills of public education, regaled terrified listeners with a public school and guns horror tale, and assured the concerned parent that the money for private schooling is a small price to pay for saving their children's lives.

The critics try to teach us about the sins of compulsory schooling in America. Their books and speeches are hard hitting and often painfully accurate. They show how public schools seem to function to serve the school bureaucracy, not the public, not the children. The critics all, in some way, call for radical changes. While Smith and Liddy are applauded for simply yelling, "Abandon ship!" Gatto and Lieberman suggest that family, church, craft and farm schools will make schools less of a state run job project and more learner friendly.

The idea that schools exist for themselves as state run job projects is a hard lesson to swallow. But I recall how the textbook selection practices in the Madison, Wisconsin Public Schools back in the early 1970s were designed to fit the publishers marketing and sales arrangements, rather than the schools' needs for books that fit the curriculum and the kids. So we changed the process to allow local schools to select their own texts. It was not easy to move from a district-wide process to an individual school procedure. The publishers gave us enormous grief. And developing a teacher-directed selection process was tedious; it involved a lot of trial and error work. In retrospect, the school-centered solution we devised to break the publishers' 1970s stranglehold on the process is very similar to the local choice, free market approach that Gatto and Lieberman advocate in the 1990s.

Breaking the government monopoly on compulsory schooling is a tall order. The free market school choice concept scares us. Some of us predict that the poor and powerless will suffer while the rich and powerful will take over. Our egalitarian heritage gives rise to the specter of a school caste system that fosters elitism. We are so used to looking at teaching from a state and school district perspective we do not trust a free market system. What about standards, accountability, teacher training? Who would supervise teachers? What would happen to teacher education programs? As workers in the education enterprise we wonder what would happen to our jobs as professors who teach teachers. At this point in the lesson another question is raised, answered, and discussed.

Question: "Hey professor, do you want some pain?"

Answer: "Gee, I don't think so."

Discussion: At the Colorado Council State IRA meeting in Denver on February 2, 1995, a dozen teachers, a principal, and two supervisors attended a workshop on changing school literacy programs. The leader, a professor, presented some case studies of teachers as literacy leaders who've made differences in their schools and communities. The meeting was informal and after the participants traded stories of ways teachers and principals work to improve the teaching of reading and writing the professor asked, "What motivates some educators to work at improving the public schools which, according to critics, are beyond repair?" One of the participants said, "I think one reason teachers hang in there has something to do with their basic motives to become teachers in the first place." This got everyone's attention and she read the following from a paper on her lap.

> My own bitterness and apprehension about teaching came as a surprise. Over the years I've been willing to tolerate the separation, corruption, criticism, even the surveillance because I've carried out my own teaching convinced I was helping children. *It's like the way a surgeon might be content with setting bones in the middle of an endless catastrophe.* My work as a classroom teacher has become a shell for me, a way to both deny and accept the harshness of school as a work place. Thank God I can "set bones" while the criticism mounts against teachers and public schools across America. (Smith, 1992)

It was quiet, there was a nodding of heads, and as she passed out copies of her paragraph, she explained how she had paraphrased it while reading Smith's book. As a veteran teacher she said, "As I read the book I identified strongly with the main character who was musing why he kept working so hard as a Moscow detective while the Soviet social system was coming apart. It seemed to me that the main reason I continue to teach in a system under attack is my belief that I am still making a difference in some children's lives." The setting bones analogy from Denver stuck with me as my lessons continued in Detroit.

At the Association for Teacher Educators conference in Detroit on February 21, 1995, Vivienne Collinson and Lisa DeMeulle presented their research on helping teachers take charge of changing schools. They impressed me as excellent young researchers—two bright, sensitive, and articulate professors. They shared the pitfalls, frustrations, hopes, and successes they experienced and documented when schools try to move from the old one-shot expert-led workshop model to a new sustained inquiry model in which teachers are the leaders.

Collinson (1995) detailed the frustrations and small victories that happened when she worked to help an elementary school in the

Midwest begin to shift from the old idea of teaching as a private activity to one of exposing and discussing teachers' beliefs and practices in a public forum. Especially intriguing and valuable was the notion of how important it was for teachers to have a shared vocabulary so that they could communicate effectively in order to collaborate. She gave the example of how her use of the term "best practices" almost doomed the project from the start. The word "best" seemed to create a climate of competition rather than a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, or trust. She documented examples of how she and the teachers learned to reword discussion questions so that discussions did not bog down with unrelated comments, non sequiturs, constant interruptions, and too many talking at the same time.

DeMeulle's (1995) work, which she reported, was to lead a large faculty of 80 teachers in Memphis, Tennessee to write a school development plan that was based on the shared visions of the staff, administration, and community. She documented the headaches, problems, as well as the progress she and the teachers made as they tried to shift from the old role of teacher as private disseminator of knowledge to a new role of teacher as facilitator, community member, and school improvement leader. They spent four months meeting, discussing, arguing. They wrote a 17 page document that included a school philosophy, shared visions for curriculum changes, a new school/community network, and a school beautification plan. Illustrating the ambiguity and lack of trust she encountered at early meetings, DeMeulle told how one teacher asked, "Are you asking us these questions because you don't know, or are you thinking we [the teachers] should decide together?" As the year progressed, DeMeulle reports that teachers moved away from their private self-interest toward a great common vision. She says, "Many teachers reported that their greatest reward was working with other teachers who cared about the school and were committed" (p. 17).

Collinson's and DeMeulle's accounts of the tensions, lack of trust, their own anxieties, excitement and frustration as they led the school development sessions illustrate both the pain and the hope involved in changing schools. Their work clearly illustrates the importance of professors and teachers who are willing to get "dirty hands" in order to move from the traditional private *setting bones* orientation to a public *shared vision* or surgical amphitheater outlook. And while both researchers are optimistic about the positive effects of teacher collaboration they acknowledge the pain, the danger. DeMeulle said, "... there are no easy solutions or quick fixes when attempting to promote teacher leadership. It is a long and complex work fraught with many issues of affect" (p. 17). The lesson winds down with another question.

Question: "Professor, what have you learned by now?"

Answer: As I think about the lesson I've learned from these encounters with both critics and workers, I go back to the Call to Forum on Sanibel Island in December 1994. I took a seat away from the front. I didn't want to go first and by the time my turn came it was clear that Gatto's book was not well liked. Most of the professors wanted to burn him at the stake as a heretic. When my turn came, I wanted to be different and positive so I said, "I thought it was a religious book. My former association with the Congregational Church squares with his ideas, especially the good effects of a social system where people feel ownership for everything that happens in their organization. I stopped talking at this point. No one responded directly to me. The Gatto lynching party resumed. Only one panelist said, "I love this book. Gatto's right, and we ought to listen and do something about it." His strong endorsement stood alone. *Dumbing Us Down* was rejected. Alice dismissed it as "A silly little book," and others were more brutal. Gatto was booed and hissed like a basketball referee who called traveling, charging, and other fouls on the beloved home team. No wonder the Forum ended with cries of "Kill the ref! Kill the ref!" The Forum rejection of the critic Gatto was very similar to the resistance workers like Collinson and DeMeulle encountered when they attempted to make changes.

And now three months later, I think I know why Gatto was rejected by professors at the 1994 Forum. We know how painful it will be to change roles. We are just like the classroom teachers Collinson and DeMeuelle met with and asked, "Let's open up, collaborate, and collectively change what we are doing." Instead of disseminating information in the privacy of campus classrooms, professors may be asked to experience the ambiguity, the frustration, and the tension that Collinson and DeMeulle describe when they worked face to face with teachers on their local school turf. If professors expect teachers to share visions, and collaborate, they will have to change from private *bone setting* on campus to a more public and ambiguous role as school reform facilitators. And while our respect for professors like Collinson and DeMeulle can run deep, we secretly dread facing the pain they encountered as they attempted to facilitate change in schools.

Perhaps the real lesson from these encounters with critics and workers is not simply that critics get fame and workers get pain. The truth is that both are needed. Gatto and Lieberman have put their fingers on some rotten spots and have suggested some solutions that need to be seriously considered. As for Frank Smith and G. Gordon Liddy, their calls to jump ship, leave, go AWOL, or quit, simply fall far short. They appear arrogant, callous, and unwilling to get their hands dirty. They're all talk and no effort.

The lesson for me is that the most reasonable way to proceed with school reform is to listen to the critics like Gatto and Lieberman and study the work of professors like Collinson and DeMeulle. Taken together, we cannot ignore the message. The Gattos and Liebermans get our attention, and young professors show us the way. They remind us that changing public schools means new roles and new expectations for professors as well as classroom teachers. And as we both try to shift from a private *setting bones in the midst of catastrophe* view of teaching to a more public and consumer-oriented view there will be more pain than fame.

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Some Funny Things Happened On My Way to the Forum

Wayne Otto

Hey, Jimmy, I said, listen to this . . . and I read him a paragraph from John Gatto's book, *Dumbing Us Down.*

I'll be honest with you. When the Call to Forum 1994 first came out, I'd called Bernie. Hey, Bernie, I said, I'll bet this guy Gatto is another one of those hot dog, award-winning, super teachers telling us poor slobs how to get off our butts and inspire stupid and surly kids to become Rhodes scholars. Bernie said that wouldn't surprise him, and then we moved on to more important topics, like what culinary delights Ralph Gillespie might be cooking up to renew us after a long, grueling day of active participation in stimulating and challenging ARF sessions.

Nevertheless, I called Borders and ordered a copy of Gatto's book. I hate when folks show up at Call to Forum to pontificate about books they haven't ever seen.

When I finally got the book, I wasn't even half way through the Biographical Note at the front before I began to change my tune about Gatto. He got my attention when he took affectionate note of the influence of his grandfather's independent German ways; and he got my respect when he talked about the dead hand of government monopoly schools and the false assumption that it is difficult to learn to read.

By the time I'd got just a little ways into the first section, "The Seven Lesson School Teacher," where Gatto is talking about the destructive lessons we teach in school, I knew I had to say *Hey, listen to this* to somebody, because it was too good to keep to myself. That was when I headed across the street to the Old Style Place, where Jimmy was patting out burgers for the noon rush. Hey, Jimmy, I said, and I read him this paragraph from page 6:

> The third lesson I teach is indifference. I teach children not to care too much about anything, even though they want to make it appear that they do. How I do this is very subtle. I do it by demanding that they become totally involved in my lessons, jumping up and down in their seats with anticipation, competing vigorously with each other for my favor. It's heartwarming when they do that; it impresses everyone, even me. When I'm at my best I plan lessons carefully in order to produce this show of enthusiasm. But when the bell rings I insist they drop whatever it is we have been doing and proceed quickly to the next work station. They must turn on and off like a light switch. Nothing important is ever finished in my class or any class I know of. Students never have a complete experience except on the installment plan.

Jimmy looked a little bit confused. "Indifference?," he said; "that guy thinks he knows about indifference? I know about indifference! I'd like to tell him a thing or two about indifference!"

Agitated, Jimmy kept on smacking out burgers for the noon rush. The patties got thin, thin, thinner. Probably not such a good idea, I decided, to order my usual—Jumbo Deluxe Burger with Curls—for lunch. A hard boiled egg, maybe; or a pickled Polish sausage.

"I work hard (SMACK) all day," Jimmy said. "I go home, I smile, I say 'Hi, honey, I'm home.' (SMACK, SMACK) she tells me back to shush, that Letterman's on. (SMACK, SMACK, SMACK) That's indifference! So don't talk to me about indifference!"

It didn't seem like an opportune time to share Gatto's other insights about the dark side of government monopoly schooling, so I ordered a Mr. Pibb to go and headed for the door. But first I plugged the juke box for six plays of "Throw Another Long on the Fire." I figured that Waylon and Willy would get Jimmy back up for the noon rush.

High Expectations

Back in my office, I fretted some about all the different ways the printed word can get people going, but I was soon caught up again in Gatto's commonsensical observations about how compulsory, government monopoly schooling dumbs us all—teachers and students alike—down. I nodded when he said that homework is mostly an intrusion on the time that kids need to learn all the important stuff that schools can never teach. I saluted when he pointed out the shame of making kids dependent on "expert opinion" for self-respect—self evaluation be damned. I felt his anger when he talked about how the ways of schooling show kids how to envy and fear the better classes and how to have contempt for the dumb class.

I called Donna Schleicher. I yelled, Do you know what school is? School is a rigged competition where you come to know your place! (That's what Gatto says on page 5.)

Donna Schleicher wondered if I'd forgot to take my medicine.

I popped my lukewarm Mr. Pibb and read on.

The more I read, the more I found myself nodding in agreement. Gatto was describing schools and schooling pretty much the way I'd experienced them—and, I'm more than a little embarrassed to say, pretty much the way I've performed in them, blithely doing my part to support "a plan where some people take more than their share" (p. 15). Gatto says, "The current debate about whether we should have a national curriculum is phony. We already have a national curriculum locked up (in the acts of government monopoly schooling) . . . Schools teach exactly what they intend to teach and they do it well: how to be a good Egyptian and remain in your place in the pyramid" (pp. 15-16).

Gatto says "School has become the replacement for church in our secular society, and like church it requires that it's teachings be taken in faith" (p. 16). Gatto *doesn't* say that what schools need is still more dollars to accomplish positive development. Instead, he says "In one of the great ironies of human affairs, the massive rethinking the schools require would cost so much *less* than we are spending now that powerful interests cannot afford to let it happen. You must understand that the business I am in is a *jobs project* and an agency for letting contracts" (p. 19). Myron Lieberman makes a similar point in his thoughtful and provocative *Public Education: An Autopsy* (Harvard Press, 1993). Seems to me that Lieberman's book has got far less attention from both educators and the public than it deserves.

Like Lieberman, Gatto suggests—admittedly in a very tentative form—a way to break that dead handed grip of institutional schooling: "Some form of free-market system in public schooling is the likeliest place to look for answers, a free market where family schools and small entrepreneurial schools and religious schools and craft schools and farm schools exist in profusion to compete with government education" (p. 20). Gatto insists that life's important lessons of "self-motivation, perseverance, self-reliance, courage, dignity and love" cannot be learned in schools as they are. "School," he says, "is a twelve-year jail sentence where bad habits are the only curriculum truly learned. I teach school . . . I should know" (p. 21).

I reached for the phone. I wanted to say I teach school, too, John Gatto, and I agree with you! But make that jail sentence sixteen years . . . with more (graduate school) *added* for "good" behavior.

But I didn't have his number.

Anyway, to make a long story just a little bit shorter, I guess you can see that despite my skeptical stance at the start, John Gatto had won me over. He was saying things that I wish I'd said. Of course I'd been somewhat disappointed by Jimmy's and Donna Schleicher's lack of enthusiasm, but I was happily anticipating a positive, supportive discussion of Gatto's ideas and proposals once I'd joined my close personal friends and esteem colleagues at the Call to Forum on sunny Sanibel Island.

Getting Gatto

The day of the Forum dawned . . . well, not exactly sunny, but *promising*. Promising to clear when the sun broke through the morning fog, which I took as a good omen. Gus fixed us a nice nourishing breakfast of Jimmy Dean pork sausage, eggs sunny-side up *a la* pig fat, grits *au* grease gravy, buttered toast and Bud Light. (Roger said that stuff might be nourishing but its lethal. He had a Dove bar instead.) I showered and put on my freshly laundered Tattered Covers Book Shop t-shirt. "So many books," it says on the front, ". . . so little time." That's not a pessimistic message, I told Ken, it's a challenge.

"Time to go to Forum," Bernie said; and so we went. Me with high expectations. If you were there you know how the Forum discussion unfolded. In case you weren't, I'll sum up briefly.

Karen introduced the topic, Gatto's book, and the Panel. Terry Bullock went first. (That's the same Terry Bullock I've known and loved as a positive thinking, look-on-the-bright-side, gentle man.) He came on like a pit bull, fangs bared; took a bite of Gatto, chewed a little, and spit it out.

That pretty much set the tone for the discussion. The rest of the Panel, one-by-one, bit and spit in turn.

Random thought, no theoretical framework," they said. "Where's his research base? . . . What about standards? . . . Why should we trust 'the people'? . . . Who's to decide how much is enough? . . . How could we get people to hold still for years of schooling without legislation?" they wondered. "Irresponsible," they called him, "a gadfly, an anarchist, a jolly bad fellow."

On and on it went, from panelist to panelist all seated in a circle, each taking a turn. I was next after Alice who was born to muse. By the time my turn came I was reeling from the punches that had been thrown, wondering what I could say that might turn the tide, hoping I could pull the fat out of the fire . . . wishing I could unmix my metaphors and think of something erudite, scholarly and persuasive to say.

I'd come to praise Gatto, not to bury him!

I have no idea what Alice said except I could tell from her tone it was negative, and I'll bet that was because Gatto never claimed that his superior insights were made possible solely by his conversion to the feminist persuasion. And then it was my turn.

I like this book, I said; but from then on things get pretty fuzzy. I know I talked some more and I remember Gus and Bernie saying something to me, something about Prozak I think. And I know the discussion continued, but all I remember is visions of townspeople with pitchforks and flaming torches.

Finally it was over and I slunk back to the condo. I tried to gaze at the calming serenity of the Gulf. I wondered why we always got a place with such a lousy view. After a while Gus popped me a Bud Light. Roger snuck me the last of the Dove bars.

I heard whispers behind my back.

How Not Why

A couple days later, back at the office, I tried to tell Donna Schleicher about the Forum.

It was awful, I said. Those people—my close personal friends and esteemed colleagues—knocked Gatto down and then they kept kicking him.

Donna looked alarmed. "Symbolically," I said and continued.

"They claimed that Gatto wants to eliminate all schools! They said that if he has his way, only rich people will have access to schools! They said they didn't trust anybody but school people to decide what kids should know and what kids should believe and how kids should behave. They said . . ."

Donna Schleicher looked skeptical. Well, that's what *I heard* them saying, I said. They were picking out the most extreme negative interpretations possible of what Gatto actually said, and they weren't acknowledging that he'd said a single thing of any merit whatsoever.

"Like what?, Donna Schleicher said.

"Like I think it's perfectly sensible," I said, "to suggest that there may be better ways for kids to learn about the world and to tune into the lives around them than by being forced to go to government monopoly schools for a prescribed number of years to be 'schooled' in ways that aren't necessarily attuned to individual/family/community aspirations and are almost certainly out of tune with anything that many people—far too many people—would perceive as pursuit of 'the common good'."

"Like I think it's perfectly sensible," I continued, "to suggest that those who cling to the ways and means of compulsory government monopoly schooling do so mainly out of self interest—not because of any sincere belief that the path we've taken is the right one or even a reasonably satisfactory one."

"Like I think it's perfectly sensible to suggest something like this," I told Donna Schleicher (and read her some words from page 100):

> Monopoly schooling has been the chief training institution of the hive society. It certifies permanent experts who enjoy privileges of status unwarranted by the results they produce. Because these privileges, once achieved, will not willingly be given over, whole apparatuses of privilege have been fashioned that are impregnable to change.

And like this (from page 94):

> By preventing a free market in education, a handful of social engineers—backed by industries that profit from compulsory schooling: *teacher colleges* [emphasis added], textbook publishers, materials suppliers, et al.,—has ensured that most of our children

> will not have an education, even though they may be thoroughly schooled.

And even like this (from page 13):

> . . . the truth is that reading, writing, and arithmetic only take about one hundred hours to transmit as long as the audience is eager and willing to learn. The trick is to wait until someone asks and then move fast while the mood is on. Millions of people teach themselves these things, it really isn't very hard.

"Be careful," Donna Schleicher said, "Didn't you say those Forum people are your close personal friends and esteemed colleagues?"

"They are," I said, "and I've been a fully participating member of the pack. But maybe it's time we took a careful look at ourselves. I think we've got so enmeshed in our own rhetoric that we've come to believe that anything we say is wonderful just because we say it! Or because we think we can make a buck, or win a promotion, or—what the hell, let's face it, most of the time we'll settle for a friendly pat on the back."

"We've got to the point in the reading business," I told Donna Schleicher, "where we put way more emphasis on the number of credits reading teachers have in reading education courses than on the number of books—real books, grown up books, books that you can't help yourself, you've got to read them and you've got to talk about them with people you like—they've read. I see reading teachers all the time who haven't read an actual book since—well, some have *never* read a book they didn't 'have to' read. No wonder so many kids fail to read—they get told how, but there's nobody to show them why!"

"And people like us," I told Donna Schleicher, "Forum people, make it worse because when *we* teach reading we teach *how*, most of us never teach *why*. Gatto is talking about *why*; we reject him because what we perceive as our bread and butter is *talking about how*."

Donna Schleicher showed me a smirk. "Sure," she said, "you can talk smart. You're retiring. You don't gotta worry about keeping babies in Pampers or making payments on the Volvo wagon . . . "

I told Diane later that I guessed Donna Schleicher might be right for once. Maybe it is easier to give up turf when you don't really need it any more.

Why do I always expect other people to be better than I am?

Redemption and Revenge

I called my friend Pastor Tom. I told him about the Call to Forum and how we'd trashed the feast that Gatto had laid before us. I said I hoped he had some comforting words to sustain me in my hour of need.

Solace, Pastor Tom told me back, is the name of his game. He read me some words from his teacher's manual:

> Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again to rend you.

"Those words are from Matthew," he said; "chapter 7, verse 6." He chuckled. "But this time it might be best if we keep them just between us."

I suppose I'll wish that I had.

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Call to Forum: A Dream About Gatto's *Dumbing Us Down*

Thomas Cloer, Jr.

The Call to Forum had people wrestling like Jacob and the angel with the problems and solutions set forth by John Taylor Gatto (1992) in *Dumbing us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*. Gatto was New York State Teacher of the Year and felt, as the name of his book implies, that most of the ills in our society today result from compulsory public schooling. His litany of ill effects of public schools include among other things: drugs, suicide, divorce, violence (p. 14), physical, moral, and intellectual paralysis (p. 16), lives devoted to buying things, accumulation as a philosophy (p. 30), destruction of the minds and character of the nation's children, and the major cause of our loss of national and individual identity (p. 102). He believed schools are bad, I mean really BAD.

Gatto believed that schools teach bad things such as: "How to be a good Egyptian and remain in your place in the pyramid" (p. 16), how to obey orders (p. 25), how to sit in confinement with people of exactly the same age and class (p. 27), and how to move from cell to cell at the sound of a gong (p. 27). Gatto scathingly refers to public schooling as "a jobs project and an agency for letting contracts. We cannot afford to save money by reducing the scope of our operation . . ." (p. 19).

Gatto's solutions forthrightly state that we must decertify teaching, privatize the whole business, and move to unconditional school choice. He preached the "congregational principle" of school children working in small groups of people with whom they feel in harmony (p. 94).

The Sandman Cometh

I hadn't seen my wife all day. She comes to these ARF conferences with me, and we go our separate ways. "How did your day go?" she asked as she awoke me by turning on the late news. "We had a huge crowd for Call to Forum," I muttered as I half asleep rode surrealistically off on a horse with John Grady Cole and Lacy Rawlins, two characters from the novel I was reading. The novel, *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) by Cormac McCarthy, is a masterpiece about two Texas teenagers growing up, becoming responsible, and managing somehow to survive. The award-winning book and author had me mesmerized and charmed like a king snake charming a songbird. I could talk and move, but my thoughts were entirely under the control of this haunting novel.

"What was the Call to Forum about?" she asked.

"Giving parents and the community complete control of the public schools," I said, "putting educationists out of the picture." I turned over, smiled with my eyes closed and entered the dream world created in my subconscious by mixing recent readings of McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* and Lowry's (1993) *The Giver*.

John Grady Cole, Lacy Rawlins, and I rode like Jonas and Gabriel in *The Giver* (1993) into another time. In my dream we rode into the 21st century and the year 2020. We rode as anachronistic misfits into a middle-sized American Texas town where two young boys, age 10, were talking on a street corner. One boy, Hobart Chadwick Hoover, was from an opulent, upper class private prep school. Each of the students at Hobart's school received $1400 vouchers. The other, Roosevelt Jones, was from a very poor, lower class private school where he used his $1400 per year voucher to pay for his education. Public schools no longer existed. We rode our horses up close, and like Ebenezer Scrooge, we were invisible and unheard as the boys talked.

> *"I remember you," the young Roosevelt said to Hobart, "You're the boy who came to Grim Gramm Elementary and talked about computers."*
>
> *"Yes," said Hobart. "I remember how difficult it was to talk to kids who had no computers in their school. You wanta see something cool? Look here at my wristwatch. It is a personal computer with 100 gigabytes of memory."*
>
> *"What's a gigabyte?" asked Roosevelt shyly.*
>
> *"Never mind. You can relate better to this," said Hobart, double-*

clicking on an icon in his wristwatch. A really neat multi-media presentation about Christmas complete with sound emanated from the PC on Hobart's wrist.

"Cool!" squalled Roosevelt. "I bet you're the only one in your school with one of those!"

Hobart laughed. "No, every kid at Dan Quayle Elementary School has one."

"Never seen nothing like that at Grim Gramm Elementary School," moaned Roosevelt.

"Look here!" said Hobart as he became more interested as Roosevelt acknowledged the superiority of Hobart's private school. "We are networking with Art Departments from 25 colleges and universities," beamed Hobart. "Watch as I interface with the different graphics software from these places."

"Good grief!" called Roosevelt. "This is amazing!"

"We each use our PC for art at Dan Quayle elementary," said Hobart. "We also network with Music Departments. Did you know this thing has a Moog synthesizer? We play 'Hail to the Chief' with these when our headmaster sticks his head into our classroom. "You know Roosevelt, our parents at Dan Quayle Elementary really do appreciate the use of the voucher money to help buy these special things for our school. How does your school use the voucher money?"

Roosevelt looked down and pushed a discarded and flattened Coke can back and forth contemplatingly and spoke, still looking down. "We can't afford much after paying for heat an' all," said Roosevelt in a low-pitched voice. "Grandpa said when he went to school tax money went to every school. They was called public schools. Grandpa said they had art supplies, computers, and even food for breakfast sometimes. But Daddy said everybody complained that the bad schools got as much tax money as the good schools."

Hobart started quickly playing with his wristwatch computer to avoid eye contact with Roosevelt.

"Heck, we don't have no computers, and our art is done on recycled grocery bags," continued Roosevelt. "Some women from a church come at Christmas, and we sung 'Joy to the World.' But other than that, you have to pay extra for any music. They give me a little toy gun, but I

throwed it away. Heck, if I pulled that thang out on my street, it'd be mistook for a real one and I'd be dead as a doornail 'fore a cat could lick. Another charity brought some crayons that had been used in something called Headstart, and we do crayon doodles on the grocery bags. It works all right for Halloween I guess. You can cover the orange pumpkins and yellow moon with black crayon and then scrape away the black; it works all right for Halloween I guess."

"Roosevelt," Hobart interrupted. "Why don't you come to my school? We have two other minority students. One is the grandson of a supreme court justice, and the other one, Pollyanna Cosby, had a grandfather that was a famous television comedian.

"Heck, how much does it cost?" asked Roosevelt skeptically.

"I think it's something like $14,000 per term," said Hobart with the speed and tone of his voice showing delayed recognition of his implausible suggestion. "You know, Roosevelt, you might be better served at the Pewt Gingrich Community Home."

"Shoot! You ain't never gonna get me in no Pewt Gingrich Community House! Billy Johnson got his head half beat off by some big boys that had quit living with their mommies."

"Why were they taken away from their mothers?" inquired Hobart.

"Well, they really waddn't," continued Roosevelt. "They turned themselves in. Yep! Volunteered to be in the community house."

"Volunteered? What do you mean, Roosevelt?"

"Well, they knowed they could run the place in a short time. There ain't no real good overseer you know, no government interference. This follows Pewt Gingrich's thinking I guess."

Just then some young ruffians stepped out from around the street corner. I recognized them as some of the street urchins from Oliver Twist (1988). One boy, with a scar showing the results of poor health care after a fight at the community house, pushed Roosevelt backward and barked, "You don't talk about the community house, punkus; it is where we do business, right boys?! He smirked as the other street urchins laughed and nodded.

"Mega Dittoes! Mega Dittoes!" the street urchins called. They had heard this at the community house where talk radio played on the loudspeaker twelve hours each day.

Poor frightened Hobart had whirled and had tried to flee, but another one of the boys had stuck a large knife through both pockets of Hobart's pants. While the knife had not touched skin, two of the boys were now carrying Hobart, like a pig on a spit, down a back alley. "Fagin, the master thief, will praise us!" exclaimed the boy with the bad scar.

*"**Mega Dittoes!** Mega Dittoes! Mega Dittoes! Mega dittoes! Meg . . ." the street urchins squalled.*

*I had to interfere. I tried to scream, but no sound came; it even hurt to try. I tried twice more but could only breathe loudly. "**No-oo-o-o—o!**" I finally shouted with a blood-curdling scream. "**No-oo-o-o—o!**"*

"Tom—Tom! Wake up! You're dreaming again. You're having another nightmare. Honey, there have been several now since the election. Are you all right?" my wife asked. I could smell chocolate candy as she kissed me on the forehead while still watching Leno on the television. "Wake up; talk to me. Forget the old dream. By the way, you never finished telling me about the Call to Forum. What was finally decided?" she asked while licking chocolate from two of her fingers.

With my sleepy red eyes looking like Wiley Coyote after receiving dynamite from the Roadrunner, I rolled over, sat up, and replied sleepily, "Nothing's ever settled; that's not the purpose. Wayne Otto liked the book; he likes lots of books. He's a voracious reader. But Wayne would see multiple layers of meaning in a recipe for boiled eggs. I agree, however, with his and Gatto's charge that we as educators often nymphomaniacally prostitute any sound educational principles we might have for any readily available grant money."

I fluffed my pillows for another try at slumber. "There were several that praised Gatto and others that doubted. A minority even thought his rhetoric and solutions amounted to no more than a hyperbolic blivet," I muttered.

"A what?" my wife asked.

"A hyperbolic blivet," I repeated. "Cormac McCarthy writes about a blivet on the page there where I have the bookmark. Read it aloud and remember it my dear," I said as my voice trailed off in sleep at the end.

My wife picked up the book removed the bookmark and mumbled something about the book having weird punctuation and no quotation marks. Then she read aloud:

When'd you eat last? Rawlins said.

The other day, said the Blevins boy.

The other day.

Yeah.

Rawlins studied him. Your name ain't Blivet is it?

It's Blevins.

You know what a blivet is?

What.

A blivet is ten pounds of shit in a five pound sack (McCarthy, 1992, p. 46).

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Effects of Anchored Instruction on Preservice Teachers' Knowledge Acquisition and Problem Solving

Victoria J. Risko

Reviews of teacher education programs conducted during the last decade have produced strong support for needed reforms that prepare teachers to acquire new knowledge and to know when and how to use this information when confronted with complex problems and unexpected classroom situations. This is especially true in reading education, where teachers must be prepared to respond to complex problems associated with implementing reading instruction for children with widely diverse learning strengths and needs.

It has been argued that teacher education programs may be producing teachers who know *what* to do but who do not know *when* or *why* procedures are most appropriately applied. Lesgold (1988) suggests that declarative or factual knowledge can be gained from teacher lectures or textbooks but that this knowledge alone will not help learners solve problems unless they also learn how to translate this knowledge into "mental acts" (p. 98), the defining the thinking about problems in ways that produce reasonable solutions. Learning to translate knowledge into action may require immersing prospective teachers in problem-solving contexts that produce "knowledge that interacts with the particular context and classroom situation in which the knowledge is transformed into action" (Richardson, 1990, p. 12).

For the last five years, several of us at Vanderbilt University have been involved in a redesign of our undergraduate developmental and remedial reading methods courses. The goal for this redesign was to provide in-class opportunities to explore content-rich videodisc cases. Whole-class discussions around case problems and issues were planned to invite sustained thinking about important information and to enhance preservice teachers' ability to use their knowledge for appropriate exploration and resolution of complexities associated with literacy instruction.

Two projects have supported our thinking about ways to improve the postsecondary education of future teachers. The initial project, funded by a Sears-Roebuck Foundation Grant (Risko, 1989), and a second project, funded by FIPSE (Risko & Kinzer, 1991-1994), enabled our design of instruction that couples technology with case methodology as an alternative to a lecture approach used for preparing undergraduate, preservice teachers. This instruction involves preservice teachers in shared-learning contexts for the analysis of authentic classroom problems that are presented on our videodisc cases.

Our notion of anchored instruction (Risko with Cognition and Technology Group of Vanderbilt, 1990) provides a theoretical frame for our case development. Following our beliefs about anchored instruction, our goal was to use case methodology within inquiry-based video environments. These environments provide "anchors" of connected case information that are shared and explored by class members for the purpose of collaborative problem solving. These environments are very different from a traditional use of video that usually shows a "lecture" on videotape or portrays an instructional approach as an exemplar for students to follow. Our cases depict real-life classroom occurrences that can be examined at many levels. They are developed to connect multiple knowledge sources of information (e.g., student data, teachers' beliefs, curriculum goals) by exploring the cases from different perspectives and to develop students' flexible use of knowledge preparing them for the unexpected when a "one way to teach" isn't applicable.

During these last five years, our investigations have helped us think about the effects of our cases on our students' learning and participation in our college classes. In earlier papers, that are identified below, we have described the purpose and design of our cases. The purpose of this paper is to summarize findings presented in previous papers, discuss current explorations on the use of our cases, and to conclude with ideas for future directions.

Looking Back: A Summary of Previous Findings

Several studies were conducted to help us evaluate the effects of our instruction on students' learning. Primary findings are summarized below.

1. Several papers support our use of videodisc-based case methodology and its implications for collaborative learning, and generate design principles illustrating how to frame such instruction in college classes (Kinzer, 1993; Risko, McAllister, & Bigenho, 1993; Risko & Kinzer, 1993; Kinzer, Risko, Carson, Meltzer, & Bigenho, 1992; Risko, 1991; Risko, Yount, & Towell, 1991; Young, McAllister, & Risko, 1991).

   Across these studies, we found support for whole class use of case-methodology and for creating cases that have multiple sources of information (e.g., classroom scene; interviews with parents, teachers, principals, and literacy experts). Our cases are not traditional cases that provide both problems and solutions. Instead our students are invited to (a) identify problems embedded in the cases, (b) analyze these by drawing on their experiences and text reading, (c) work collaboratively to share perspectives and interpretations, and (d) examine multiple ways to respond to identified problems that are context-specific to the case under investigation. Cross-case comparisons help students go beyond thinking that there is a "one right way" to respond to problems and classroom happenings.

2. A pretest-posttest control group design evaluated preservice teachers' comprehension of course content and their ability to use this information spontaneously to analyze novel cases. These findings strongly support the use of video-based instruction to enhance preservice teachers' ability to think flexibly and to solve disparate problems in the classroom (Risko, 1992).

3. Within several studies, we conducted a microanalysis of classroom discourse and described how learning was enhanced during cooperative learning activities that occurred in college preservice methods courses (Risko, 1992; Risko, Yount, & McAllister, 1992). Discourse patterns revealed an active and generative stance adopted by the college professor and students to elaborate on each others' ideas, to generate connections across multiple texts and video materials, to share personal experiences for explaining target concepts, to think flexibly about case material and so on.

A recent independent study reported by Mergendoller, Johnsten, Rockman, and Willis (1994), who observed in our college classes, indicated that even though they as researchers were primed "to expect a more in-depth discussion and analysis of teaching techniques in the reading methods class, the result [of observing discussions in our classes] was still startling. Undergraduate students discussed classroom cases with a sophistication and depth that is not normally expected of novice teacher education students." (Mergendoller, et al., 1994, p. 55). A consistent finding of our studies relates to the in-depth and comprehensive discussions occurring around our cases in our classes.

4. In another set of studies, we examined field notes generated from observations in the college classes, and questionnaire and interview data collected from our undergraduates during the project's baseline and intervention phases. These revealed substantial progress in students' ability to analyze classroom problems from multiple perspectives, in the ability to think flexibly about classroom problems, and in the application of content and procedural knowledge to produce reasonable solutions to complex problems (Risko, 1991, 1992; Risko, McAllister, Peter, & Bigenho, 1994).

Application of Knowledge

Two recent research papers are summarized below. One study (Risko, Peter, & McAllister, 1994) was designed to trace systematically the process by which preservice teachers involved in our instruction learn to use newly acquired information to guide their instructional decisions. We focused on three participants enrolled in the remedial reading methodology course during the Fall, 1993 semester. These three students were chosen from our data set because they met two criteria—they were typical (of our undergraduate students) and they represented maximum variation sampling (students were representative of the range of majors and previous school experiences of those enrolled in the course). The data set included pre- and post-tests, transcripts of informal interviews and classroom discourse, copies of students' lesson plans from the associated practicum, observations during the practicum teaching, and final reports written by the students.

The constant comparison method of analysis was used and cross-case pattern analysis revealed shared patterns that cut across the cases. These patterns derive their significance from having emerged from the heterogeneity of the cases. This method of analysis allowed us to analyze and document changes that occurred in our students' beliefs and actions, and how they constructed new knowledge about teaching.

Our data analysis produced several findings. First, we observed that our students entered the course with limited understanding of the complexities of reading instruction. Consequently, they focused on narrow aspects of reading development to guide their analysis of the initial video case. Second, continued involvement in the analysis of the video cases produced a noticeable shift in the students' ability to adopt additional perspectives to think about the case information, and this shift occurred prior to their actual teaching experiences. This finding is in direct contrast with claims made by previous researchers, who indicate that flexible thinking about complex problems may not occur until students are placed in actual teaching situations. Our findings, however, suggest that the analysis of our videodisc cases helped students to make connections across several perspectives (i.e., child factors, instructional method, text factors) even earlier than their entry into the classroom.

Third, we found that preservice teachers' sustained use of different perspectives to analyze cases during the class sessions provided a rich knowledge base and a method of referring to this information when they were asked to identify and resolve problems they were experiencing in their own teaching. Overall, this line of research provides a way to specify more precisely the learning stages of preservice teachers and characteristics of a learning environment that help preservice teachers access relevant information when it is needed in actual teaching situations and yields extremely useful background for our dissemination seminars.

The goal for a second study (Risko, in press) was directed toward a more in-depth analysis of students' knowledge acquisition and ability to adopt multiple perspectives to respond to problems situated in novel cases. An examination of the preservice teachers' mental representations of learning and teaching was conducted by comparing the thinking of "experienced" teachers (graduate students) and preservice teachers (undergraduate students). Following a procedure used by Lundeberg and Fawver (1993), the data analysis occurred in two stages. First, the students analyzed a case for both pre- and post-case analyses and second, they compared their pre- and post-analyses using a set of questions to guide their written responses. A qualitative analysis of the 28 protocols revealed patterns of differences and similarities among the ideas generated from the two groups of students. Differences between the thinking of the two groups involved (a) the number of perspectives taken to analyze case-specific information, with the experienced teachers displaying more viewpoints to guide their thinking, and (b) the ability to provide theoretical support for perspectives and recommendations with the graduate students outperforming the undergraduates in their ability to provide theoretical reasons for their decisions.

Important similarities between the two groups revealed that the preservice teachers moved from linear models of learning and teaching to models that integrated multiple perspectives to guide their analysis of case information. Pre-test to post-test changes for the preservice teachers were similar in direction to that of the graduate students' changes, and exceeded "developmental milestones" typically assigned to "novice" teachers. The data revealed that the undergraduates were developing flexible knowledge representations and an in-depth understanding of information much earlier than what may be expected for preservice teachers. When confronted with complex and novel problems, these future teachers were able to generate accurate interpretations of multiple sources of information and provide resolutions that were context-appropriate. Additionally, these students evaluated their own growth and beliefs in ways that helped them identify the importance of information they were learning and its positive influence on their teaching and beliefs.

Significance and Reflection

Across our studies, we have collected both formative and summative data to analyze our students' participation and learning. We know that our courses have changed in substantial ways. Students are engaged in in-depth discussions of complex information. We have viewed major changes in the ways our students analyze case content and draw on varied sources and perspectives to help them respond to classroom problems.

The recent national study of technology use in teacher education conducted by Mergendoller et a., (1994) was authorized by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). These researchers visited our campus and sat in our classes. They read our manuscripts, inspected our raw data, and conducted numerous interviews with our students and instructors. The conduct of this independent evaluation of our program led the authors to conclude that our reform effort is making substantial progress and, according to their criteria, it ranked as one of four national programs "exhibiting exemplary practice." These results were gratifying to us, especially when we reflect on the hundreds of hours we devoted to videotaping in classrooms, editing numerous videotapes to produce eight one-hour cases, revising course content to develop information embedded in the cases, and developing instruments that could be used to evaluate our students' learning. This independent analysis from OTA is helping us firm up some of our hunches about the use of multimedia cases to build preservice teachers' sustained thinking about issues that they face as teachers. Such instruction can enhance preservice teachers' development of new perspectives and use of information in their own teaching situations.

While we believe we have made much progress in understanding the power of technology to create problem-based learning environments, we know there is much more to be accomplished. Preparing future teachers for classroom instruction is a complex activity. We need additional "test beds" (Mergendoller et al., 1994) where we can examine the effectiveness of our materials when they are used by other instructors at different colleges and universities. We need to explore alternative ways to use the power of technology to enhance methods courses. For example, we have used whole class discussions of our cases on videodiscs with good results. We envision that other technologies, such as CD-ROM, will provide additional ways for students to engage in case analysis. Such analysis may even be conducted independently by students. If so, what will be gained and what will be lost? Also, we need to explore best uses of technology. When is technology most helpful? Are there other choices for providing information that may be just as effective? As we explore ways to create problem-solving environments for preservice teachers, we will continue to question the role of technology for supporting our teaching and the learning of our students.

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Explorers of the Universe: An Action Research Scientific Literacy Project

Marino C. Alvarez

The "Explorers of the Universe" is a collaborative project that involves teachers and their students investigating authentic astrophysical problems and analyzing data from state-of-the-art automatic telescopes. The project is designed to stimulate an interest in astronomy within and among elementary, middle, and secondary students, while promoting literacy and technology skills in the process. The Explorers of the Universe project is founded on convincing evidence that learning is achieved when students can integrate their informal learning experiences with their formal in-school experiences within lessons designed to include authentic tasks and materials related to their world knowledge, interest, and experience.

An overview of the project is first described, followed by the role of action research, and ending with a discussion of preliminary findings that relate to literacy and the learning of science concepts.

Project Design

This action research project is an educational scientific literacy investigation under the joint auspices of the Tennessee State University

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(TSU) College of Education and the Center of Excellence in Information Systems - Astrophysics Component. It is conducted with astronomy and physics teachers and their students in three high schools: University School of Nashville, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, Virginia; and Gallatin High School, Gallatin, Tennessee. Also involved in the project are resources for these teachers and students to access. These resources are TSU astronomers, university educators (Cornell University, Stanford University, and Vanderbilt University), members of the community, and members of the Leonard Bernstein Center who are incorporating the arts into the science curriculum.

High school astronomy and physics teachers and their students are involved in the Variable Stars component of our project. Eventually, they will be the first to become involved with the NASA Ames Research Center to test prototype scheduling software for automatic telescopes. The variable stars project consists of six phases in which students conduct their case-based research in collaboration with three full-time astronomers at Tennessee State University. These six phases are: (a) Identifying Initial Background Questions, (b) Identifying Variable Stars in Archival Data, (c) Classifying Variable Stars, (d) Analyzing Archival Variable Star Data, (e) Conducting Visual Observation of Variable Stars, and (f) Conducting Photoelectric Observation of Variable Stars on Automatic Telescopes. Astronomers at Tennessee State University conduct remote, automatic observing with four automatic telescopes located at the Fairborn Observatory site on Mt. Hopkins, 30 miles from Tucson, Arizona. Within this collaboration students will be placing stars on these telescopes and monitoring their status using scientific and mathematical calculations derived from data computed from their input on computers controlling these automatic telescopes.

During each phase, students enter their notes, observations, findings, log notations, data analyses, and so forth onto a text file that serves as a resource for other students to access and share their thoughts. This text file also includes students' working papers, concept maps, vee diagrams, and video segments of events or objects. This collection becomes part of each student's computer-based working portfolio that is used as a tool for self-assessment and for mediating knowledge with the teacher and their peers.

Once these six phases of the variable star case are completed, information appearing on each student's text file is then pressed onto a compact disc. This disc serves as a repository for other students either in the same class, succeeding classes, or for students in other participating schools to access. This disc serves two purposes. First, it changes a short-term investigation into a longitudinal one in that students entering this course continue in the data analyses of these variable stars. Entering students also engage in their own initial short-term variable star project that eventually adds to the data base and becomes a longitudinal study. Second, the astronomers at TSU are able to learn more about these stars from these ongoing observations and data analyses by these student researchers. The TSU Learning Methods Laboratory housed in the Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education, serves as the hub for the computer-based technology. Support personnel are available for consultation with the schools.

The students will be collaborating with the NASA Ames Research Center to test artificial intelligence techniques for improving the scheduling of observations on automatic telescopes and to develop software packages for simplifying access to automatic telescopes via the World Wide Web. Students will share their observations and findings among the three participating schools and within their school.

An Action Research Project

These investigations are grounded in the principles of action research. Action research is the acting on an event, a problem or an idea, by an individual or group directly involved in gathering and studying the information for themselves, and using the results for the purpose of addressing specific problems within a classroom, school, program, organization, or community. This setting in motion of a strategy for the systematic study of an event that evolves from an idea or problem is the basis on which these investigations are predicated. In this project, the events that are studied take place in an educational setting and the study is conducted by student and teacher researchers in collaboration with university educators and astronomers evolving from studying variable stars. This action research strategy is accomplished through a recursive cycle of (a) identifying an idea or problem area, (b) studying it by gathering and analyzing data, and (c) reflecting on the data to make inferences. The data derived from this type of research is emergent and requires the teacher and student to engage in reflective thinking as it evolves. The strategy used to design and monitor its progress is presented in the Appendix.

Action research seems to lend itself to an astrophysics project such as this one where observations, reflections, and modifications occur as this investigation ensues. There is a basic difference between astrophysics and other branches of physics. Astrophysics is *observational* in nature, where the other branches of physics are *experimental*. In solid-state physics, properties of a given material can be studied by taking a sample of that material and subjecting it to a variety of tests in a laboratory. In the process, we can isolate its response to various conditions by varying those conditions in a controlled way. In contrast, the objects studied in astronomy are so far removed that we cannot produce any changes in their environment, and, therefore, objects must be observed as they appear.

Incorporating Literacy

Scientific literacy encompasses mathematics, technology, and the natural and social sciences. However this notion is extended in this project by incorporating other disciplines such as art, music, history, literature, and other subject areas in ways that expository and narrative discourse are intricately interwoven. Communicating what transpires within the confines of science, mathematics, and technology is vital to all disciplines especially to learners who are expected to achieve educational goals espoused by the academies of these and other disciplines. The literacy skills needed to learn, make connections within and among disciplines, and communicate to others are vital in this enterprise. So, too, are the specific ways in which these learners use language and instructional tools for learning and applying scientific and mathematical concepts (e.g., concept maps, vee diagrams, computer applications).

Literacy instruction in many content area classrooms is restricted to textbooks and laboratory manuals. However, science textbooks and methods of instruction may impede progress toward science literacy when the emphasis is on right answers rather than exploration of questions, and memory at the expense of critical thought (Rutherford & Ahlgren, 1990). Seldom are reading and writing activities that incorporate other subject disciplines made available to the student or expected by the content teacher. Instead, students rely on their textbook to supply factual knowledge and encounter difficulty when the language of the text or laboratory manual presents them with vague or ill-defined concepts. In such situations, learning experiences become "artificial" in that understanding and connecting facts and ideas are abandoned in favor of rote memorization. Learning experiences are artificial when the information that is presented lacks a situational context for students to link new ideas to existing knowledge (Alvarez, 1993). In this situation, students often resort to storing this "artificial" information as compartmentalized units to be later accessed in a specific subject area by way of either question answering or examination (Potts, St. John & Kirson, 1989).

If we expect critical thinking to occur, we need to provide students with problem-solving lessons in meaningful learning contexts. These learning contexts become meaningful when new information is linked to existing concepts, and when learned, becomes incorporated (integrated and related to other knowledge sources in memory) rather than compartmentalized (isolated due to rote memorization). This notion is consistent with Ausubel's (1968) theory of learning, Gowin's (1981) theory of educating, and Gragg's (1940) warning that wisdom can't be told.

Pilot Study

As a way to examine critical thinking, a pilot study was conducted to investigate the effects of engaging students in the exploration of open-ended cases with variable stars in their learning. Six high school students enrolled in an astronomy class participated in this action research study. These students worked in teams of two and collected information that dealt with the initial phase of this six phase case-based investigation. Students constructed concept maps and shared them with the teacher and each other to monitor their understanding of the concepts they were studying. These maps also served as a template from which to write their paper. Students consulted internet sources on the World Wide Web and used electronic mail to communicate with astronomers. They also kept logs, reviewed books and periodicals related to their topic, and maintained a working portfolio. Evaluation consisted of student constructed concept maps, log entries, working portfolios, and a collaborative paper for each of the three teams.

Preliminary results from this pilot case-based study indicated that students used a variety of learning contexts that focused on processes to achieve their understanding of variable stars. Of interest were the ways in which these students readjusted their prior notions of completing a product when they were confronted with problem-oriented authentic tasks and assignments. These students have discerned for themselves that getting the "right" answer is neither easy nor absolute. Instead, their case research is taking them into areas of exploring different pathways and incorporating and applying other subject disciplines into their investigations. A shift seems to be emerging from learning that is dependent upon the teacher to that initiated by the student and pursued with a purpose.

Conclusion

This project is a way for teachers and their students to explore unknown phenomena using authentic materials and instruments that are situated in a context that requires critical and imaginative thinking. Social constructions occur among peers, teachers, university educators, community members, and astronomers. The extent to which these social constructions occur are dependent upon the willful intent of the student researcher.

A goal of this project is to encourage students in science and mathematics to simultaneously become literate and knowledgeable in other academic disciplines. This notion of incorporating the curriculum goes beyond teaching and learning science as an academic exercise. Instead, the focus is on ways for students to use science and literacy skills to better understand their world. The role that an emergent and negotiated curriculum plays in this process is a significant component of this investigation (e.g., Boomer, 1987; Gowin, 1981).

In such a curriculum, questions are valued and encouraged by the teacher as students engage in inquiries that go beyond the minimum required in a *fixed* curriculum. In this forum, the teacher and student are both involved in the learning process. Both are engaged in an *emergent* curriculum through reciprocal questioning, discussing, and seeking resolutions to unsolved problems that goes beyond information presented in a text or a curriculum guide. In essence, what evolves is a "community of thinkers" (see Boomer, 1987). This process occurs when the teacher arranges the lessons to include facts and ideas using authentic materials in problem-oriented formats that invite critical thinking and imagination to accomplish resolution. The teacher becomes the student's facilitator and, in the process, a learner of new information. The student becomes an explorer and a scientist by first imaging what can be, and then forming concepts through critical thinking and deliberate learning.

In our project, students and teachers are emerging into a community of thinkers. Teachers are thinking and learning more about their subject area as they (a) prepare topics for cases; (b) analyze their students' concept maps, vee diagrams, and working portfolios portrayed on interactive computer text files; and (c) negotiate the curriculum by guiding and encouraging students to engage in imaginative and critical thinking. Likewise, students are thinking and learning about the world by relating their formal inschool experiences to their informal out-of-school experiences. As they research their case, they are self-propelled into an arena that invites them to know more about the processes of learning. Their student-researched cases provide multiple possibilities for resolution, and open areas for discussion that extend and integrate the discipline with other subject areas that enrich the learning context. Knowing and coming to know become a reality. Together students and teachers become a community of thinkers: a community where knowledge is shared and ideas are valued.

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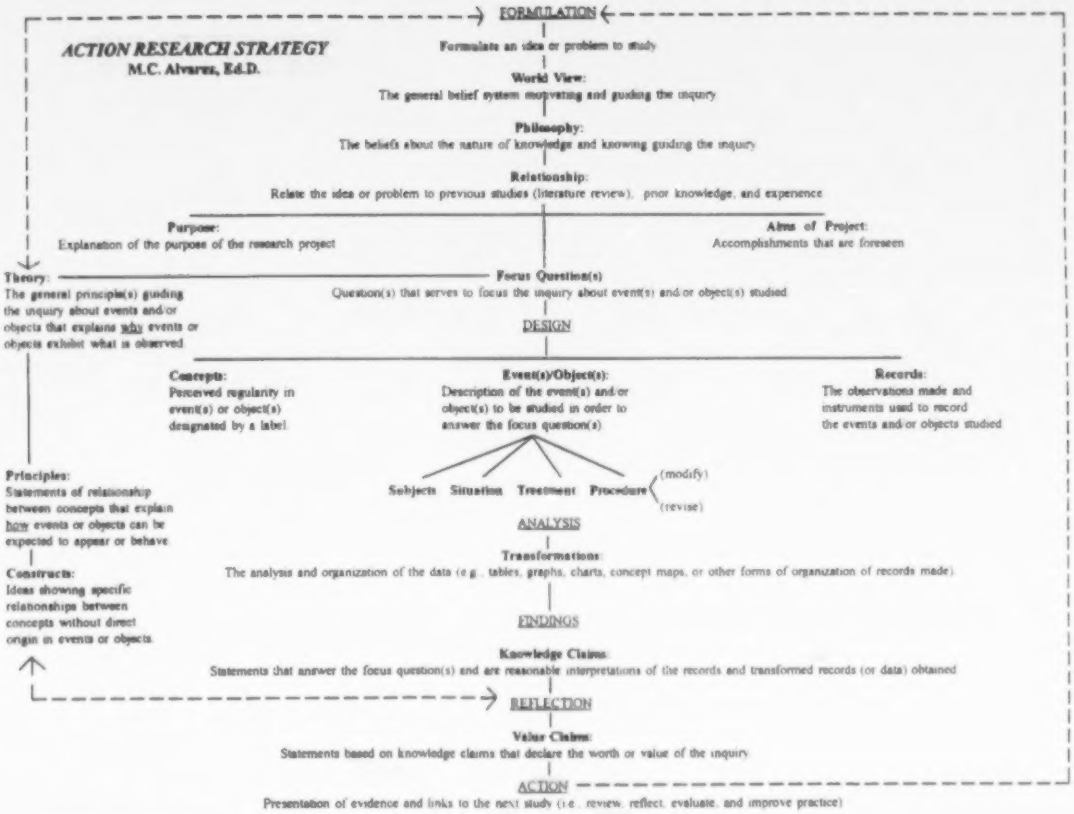
Appendix



ACTION RESEARCH STRATEGY

M.C. Alvarez, Ed.D.

FORMULATION

Formulate an idea or problem to study

World View:
The general belief system motivating and guiding the inquiry

Philosophy:
The beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing guiding the inquiry

Relationship:
Relate the idea or problem to previous studies (literature review), prior knowledge, and experience

Purpose:
Explanation of the purpose of the research project

Aims of Project:
Accomplishments that are foreseen

Theory:
The general principle(s) guiding the inquiry about events and/or objects that explains why events or objects exhibit what is observed

Focus Question(s)
Question(s) that serves to focus the inquiry about event(s) and/or object(s) studied

DESIGN

Concepts:
Perceived regularity in event(s) or object(s) designated by a label

Event(s)/Object(s):
Description of the event(s) and/or object(s) to be studied in order to answer the focus question(s)

Records:
The observations made and instruments used to record the events and/or objects studied

Subjects **Situation** **Treatment** **Procedure** (modify) (revise)

Principles:
Statements of relationship between concepts that explain how events or objects can be expected to appear or behave

Constructs:
Ideas showing specific relationships between concepts without direct origin in events or objects

ANALYSIS

Transformations:
The analysis and organization of the data (e.g., tables, graphs, charts, concept maps, or other forms of organization of records made)

FINDINGS

Knowledge Claims:
Statements that answer the focus question(s) and are reasonable interpretations of the records and transformed records (or data) obtained

REFLECTION

Value Claims:
Statements based on knowledge claims that declare the worth or value of the inquiry

ACTION

Presentation of evidence and links to the next study (i.e., review, reflect, evaluate, and improve practice)

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Who Taught You How to do That? Insights into Literacy Learning in a Student-Centered, Nongraded Classroom

Mona W. Matthews

Five-year-old Randy intently watches eight-year-old Nathan write in his journal. After a few minutes, Randy asks, "Who taught you how to do that?" Nathan responds, "I don't know," and continues to write. It is early February and Randy has been in Wendy's nongraded classroom for five days. Randy's question is essentially the question that guided my observations in this classroom. How do children, who range in age by three years, assist each other in their literacy learning? I sought the answer to this question in this classroom because of the impact of Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist views on interpretations of literacy learning. This perspective has at its core three beliefs: ". . . (a) knowledge is constructed through the individual's interaction with the sociocultural environment; (b) higher mental functions, including reading and writing, are social and cultural in nature; and (c) knowledgeable members of a culture can help others learn" (McCarthy & Raphael, 1992, p. 16). Students, therefore, become literate by interacting with others. The knowledge gained is not an objective knowledge that is *out there* just to be learned but rather is constructed when individuals interact with adults and more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Guided by these views, I observed children in a nongraded classroom to see how they assisted each other in their literacy learning. I sought answers to these questions: What role do children in a nongraded classroom play in each other's literacy learning? When given a choice, with whom do the children choose to work? And how do the friendship patterns in the classroom impact the children's interactions with each other?

In this article, the theories and research that frame and provide background for the study are described, the teacher and the children are introduced, and the strategies used for collecting and analyzing the data are presented. Finally, what was learned from watching the children and the teacher is discussed.

Theory and Background

An educational innovation of the 1950s through the 1970s—nongraded classrooms (i.e., classrooms composed of children one year or more apart in age)—is reappearing in the 1990s. Gutierrez and Slavin (1992) identified three reasons for renewed interest in nongraded instruction. One is the concern about the effects on children of repeating a grade. The second reason concerns the psychological impact (O'Neil, 1992) and the instructional impact of ability grouping during reading instruction on low-achieving children (Allington, 1980; Alpert, 1974; Gambrell, Wilson & Gantt, 1981). Third is the interest of early childhood educators in the theoretical underpinnings of the nongraded philosophy. A central tenet of this philosophy, as described by Anderson and Pavan (1993), is the belief ". . . that individuals are unique and need different treatments to reach their maximum growth potential" (p. 43).

Theoretical support for a nongraded organization can be found in the principles of a social constructivist view of learning. This perspective situates learning in the interactions that occur between a child and an adult and a more competent peer. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that these interactions initially result in interpsychological learning. Ultimately, this learning which has been supported by others is internalized by the child and develops into intrapsychological learning. When this level of learning has been achieved, the child has made the learning his own and can now function without the support of others. The child's resultant understandings of reading and writing, therefore, are a blend of personal constructions developed through interactions with others.

Confirmation of the positive effect students can have on each other's learning can be found in the literature on cooperative learning (Slavin, 1990; 1991). Studies investigating the benefits of cooperative learning have revealed that students involved in cooperative learning experiences develop more positive feelings about themselves and others, improve their ability to interact with others, and in some instances show increases in achievement (Slavin, 1990; 1991). What is missing from the literature is information about how children in nongraded student-centered classrooms assist each other in their literacy learning. The focus of previous research investigating nongraded instructional programs, has been the impact these programs have on children's achievement (e.g., Brody, 1970; Rudisill, Yarborough, & Johnson, 1982) and/or social development (e.g., Mycock, 1966; Vogel & Bowers, 1972; Yerry & Henderson, 1964). No study investigating how children in student-centered nongraded classrooms assisted each other in their literacy development was located. This study provides some of this information.

The Teacher and the Children

Wendy had taught for 14 years. This was her second year teaching in a nongraded kindergarten through second grade classroom. The children were given a lot of choice in how they pursued their literacy. They were able to choose the types of literacy events they wanted to perform, as well as to decide with whom they wanted to work.

Wendy's focus throughout the day was on the development of the children's literacy ability. Each day began with several literacy-oriented routines (reading the good and bad news recorded by the children, going over the calendar, and singing songs printed on charts). These routines were followed by a teacher-directed activity, reading a book, writing in their journal, or center time. Books were read to the children several times during the day, and the subjects of the stories were frequently suggested as topics for journal writing.

At different times during the day, the teacher and the paraprofessional worked with small groups of children. The instructional focus of these small, teacher-directed instructional events was the skills and concepts outlined in the state's mandated curriculum (e.g., letter/sound relationships, understanding and using question words). The core of Wendy's literacy program, however, was the children's self-selected reading and writing activities during center time and their journal writing. Although reading and writing were strongly encouraged during center time, these were the activities of choice of most of the children; they were not required. Later, near the end of the observations, Wendy implemented a second set of centers in which the children were required to either read or write. She called these literacy centers. The original centers, which included such activities as block building, puzzles, and Legos, were retained. As the children worked in both types of centers, the teacher circulated and talked with them about what they were doing.

The school in which Wendy taught is part of a large urban school system. Approximately 80% of the children were on free or reduced lunch. Twenty-four children were in Wendy's classroom, 14 girls and 10 boys. The classroom represented the ethnic diversity of the area. There were 14 Caucasians, 4 African-Americans, 2 Asians, 3 Hispanics, and 1 child of mixed ethnicity. Three of the children were learning to speak English.

There was also diversity in the children's literacy competence. Some five- and six-year-old children could read and write better than some of the seven- and eight-year-olds. Consequently age was not an accurate indicator of who possessed the most competence in reading and writing.

Data Collection and Analysis

Observations occurred approximately once a week from January 20 until April 12. Thirty-eight hours of observational data were collected. Although the observations formally began in January, the children had seen me and talked with me since October. Their classroom was part of a larger study involving five other classrooms that investigated the effect a nongraded organization has on literacy development. The students prior exposure to me, I believe, eased and hastened my entry into their classroom. Moreover, because the children were allowed to move freely in the classroom, my presence was not as obvious as it would have been had they been seated at desks.

The methods used to gather the data were participant observation, collection of student work samples, and both formal interviews and informal conversations with the teacher. Sociometric procedures were also used to identify the friendship patterns within the classroom.

Procedures for analyzing the data were adapted from those outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Generally, the data were initially reduced to the interactions between the children. Data were then coded through a process of making comparisons and asking questions. For example, how is the behavior exhibited by this child similar to or different from other behaviors exhibited by other children during other interactions? This initial analytical process resulted in the labeling of the interactions or phenomena and eventually the conceptualization of categories to describe what was occurring during the interactions. The analysis then proceeded with the opening up of the categories. For this part of the analysis, questions were again asked, e.g., Who initiates the interactions? Does the child initiate an interaction with a peer who is close by, or does the child move to find a particular person? The dimensions and the properties of the categories were defined by this part of the analysis. Additional analysis occurred by further and closer comparisons of critical categories and phenomena. For example, the sociometric data were used to identify the children selected most often by their peers as a best friend and those who were selected least often as a best friend by their peers. The comparison of these interactions eventually led to the identification of a critical intervening condition in the interactions.

I used several strategies to verify the results of the analyses. Data from one source were checked with data from other sources. For example, the friendship patterns observed in the room were checked against those identified by the children during the sociometric procedure. To ensure that I was not biased by the sociometric data, I waited to analyze the sociometric data until the analyses of the interactions were complete. Another strategy used to verify the data was to check and recheck the emerging patterns by looking for examples and nonexamples of them in the data. A final verification strategy involved the classroom teacher. After I analyzed the data, I interviewed the teacher, and in the process of our conversation, I asked her questions related to the research focus, as well as questions related to the themes and patterns observed during the interactions. In all cases her answers were the same ones that emerged during data analysis. Although the teacher knew I was interested in the children's reading and writing behavior, she was not aware of the specific research focus.

The Children's Pursuit of Literacy: Accomplished with a Little Help from Their Friends

The 24 children in this classroom traveled many different paths toward literacy. Some had already developed enough competence in reading and writing that these were known and familiar processes. Others, however, appeared to have not yet begun their quest. A description of their pursuits follows.

The Participation of Friends in the Children's Literacy Pursuit

Sixty-seven self-selected child-child interactions during center time and journal writing events were analyzed. An interaction was defined as any time a child initiated a conversation or an activity with another child. Interactions formed or initiated by the teacher were not included.

These interactions revealed that the children assisted each other in a variety of ways. One complementary pattern of observed behaviors was seeking and assisting. Children displaying seeking behavior requested information about how to spell or read a word, or they sought a companion or an audience for their work. Those assisting provided the requested information, supported another child's literacy efforts, modeled literacy behavior, or provided an idea for something to do. The following interactions illustrate seeking and assisting behaviors.

> **Interaction 1:** Nora is reading a book, and Lynne is watching. They are sitting in the beanbag chair in the book corner. Lynne has a book in her lap, but she watches Nora as Nora reads aloud three more books. The two girls do not talk with each other; Nora reads out loud, and Lynne listens. The interaction continues for the full center time.
>
> **Interaction 2:** Nathan and June are reading and answering the questions the teacher has written on a large refrigerator box which serves as a chart stand. Nathan writes June's answers for her on a small piece of paper. They place their answers in the envelopes attached to the box.
>
> **Interaction 3:** Thomas N. is in the homemaking center creating labels for the items he is selling in his make-shift restaurant. Shanise had been with him but left when Thomas N. said her writing was messy. Thomas N. gets up from the small table and walks to the other part of the room where Shanise is now. He asks Shanise how she spells her name. She spells it, and Thomas N. returns to the homemaking center and writes Shanise's name under his.
>
> **Interaction 4:** Andy joins Randy at the overhead projector. Randy says, "Let's erase this and write the ABC's." Randy erases what is on the overhead and begins to write the ABC's. Andy writes the ABC's on one part of the overhead, and Randy writes them on the other side of the overhead. Randy tells Andy, "I got a good one we can write." Randy proceeds to tell Andy a story about the Power Rangers. Andy writes "X-MAN" on the overhead."

In addition to performing seeking and assisting behaviors, the children participated in each other's literacy pursuit by collaborating in an activity or an event. The children were said to be collaborating if they appeared to be working toward the accomplishment of a single task or activity. One child may have initiated the idea or may even have led in accomplishing the task or activity; however, the children worked together to perform it. The following interactions illustrate collaborating behavior.

Interaction 1: Ti, Rebecca, and Thuy are sitting on the carpet. They get up and walk over to the bookshelf, and each gets a copy of the same book. They decide who will read first, second, third. They take turns reading a page until the book is complete.

Interaction 2: Amy and Jane are walking around the room with meter sticks. They are pointing to the print on the walls and the print contained on the charts hanging in the room. As they point to the print, they read it together.

Interaction 3: Jeffrey, Richard, and Nathan have put together five dinosaur stand-up puzzles and move to the round table to write signs requesting other children not to touch the puzzles. Nathan has written "Do not touch these ara speshel dinosaurs." Richard copies what Nathan has written on another sheet of paper. Richard says, "I can't write that fast." When Nathan finishes, he and John walk off to place the signs under the animal puzzles. Richard gets up, gets Nathan's paper, and brings it back to the table to finish copying it.

There were two other, less frequently observed ways the children participated in each other's literacy learning. One was to applaud a peer's efforts. This is illustrated in this interaction between a second-grade-age child and a kindergarten-age-child: "Goodness Lewis, you know how to write your name. I didn't know that you could do that. You're getting so big!" The second less frequent way they participated in each other's learning was to inform a child when a literacy behavior was performed incorrectly. This is illustrated in this interaction between Andy, a first-grade-age child and Susan, a kindergarten-age child. Andy moves to the song chart and Susan joins him. Both are holding meter sticks. They turn to the first song. They begin to sing. They turn the paper to another song and point to the words with the meter sticks. Susan is matching what she sings with the print on the page; Andy is not. Susan says to Andy, "You're not doing it right."

The Friends with whom the Children Interacted

When the 67 interactions were analyzed to determine who was interacting with whom, it was revealed that in 95% (63) of the interactions at least one child possessed more literacy competence than the others. The teacher identified the more competent peer in each interaction. She was instructed to identify a peer as more competent only if there was a clear distinction between the children's ability. If a clear distinction did not exist, then the children's competence was noted as the same. Wendy did not know why the names were grouped.

The interactions were then analyzed to determine if the children were interacting with children who would have been placed in another grade had they been in a traditional graded program. In 67% (45) of the cases, the children were interacting with children either across one grade or two grades.

The Impact of Friendships on Children's Interactions

Sociometric data were gathered on 19 of the 24 children in Wendy's classroom. Data were not gathered on a child who was absent for several weeks recovering from an accident. Guidelines for administering the sociometric procedures were adapted from Quay and Jarrett (1984). Generally, the children were shown individual photographs of their classmates by a research assistant. They were asked to place each photograph in one of three categories—Best Friend, Friend, or Not A Friend. The data were then ordered by the percentage of children who selected them as a Best Friend, A Friend, or Not A Friend. The number of children in each Best Friend category is shown in Table 1. The sociometric data were then compared to the observational data.

Table 1

Number of Children in Each Best Friend Category

Superior Acceptance	High Acceptance	Acceptance	Low Acceptance
90-85	84-65	64-40	39-21
1	1	12	5

Note: Sociometric Data reported only on the children who remained in the classroom all year. Data were not available on one child because of a long-term absence. Each category range reported in percentages.

An analysis of the sociometric data shows that for two children in the low acceptance category, the patterns revealed in the sociometric data did intervene in their success with interacting with other children, thereby limiting their access to resources and companionship. A third child who also received few nominations in the Best Friend category was less affected. Table 2 illustrates the relationship among several variables for these three children.

Table 2

Description of the Academic, Social and Peer/Child Response Variables of Three Children

Child	Relative Literacy Competence	Peer Acceptance	Desire for Peer Interaction	Observed Peer Response to Child	Child's Behavior in Class
Susan	High	Neutral	Low	• Used child as resource • Some interaction with child	• Engaged when alone • Used teacher as resource • Was a resource to others
Richard	High	Negative	High	• Low interaction with child except for best friends	• Engaged when with best friends, otherwise wanders • Sometimes became aggressive
Thomas	Low	Negative	High	• Denied child's request to interact • Sometimes interacted with identified best friend	• Moved from activity to activity • Used peers as a resource • Child sometimes requested by teacher to leave activity to regain control

Thomas A. was one of the children whose access was limited. Sixty-three percent of Thomas's peers stated that he was Not A Friend, and only 21% of his peers identified him as a Best Friend. Thomas A. was frequently observed moving from one activity to another. When he moved to a center in which others were playing, they frequently ignored him, and he shortly moved to another center. When he did interact with others, it was usually with Nathan. Nathan was a more competent reader and writer, and Thomas A., although one of the older children in the room, was identified by the teacher as one of the least competent readers and writers. Thomas A. also had difficulty controlling his behavior. On several occasions during my observations the teacher asked him to remove himself so that he could regain control of his behavior. The following interaction illustrates Thomas A.'s behavior and his peers' response to him.

> Thomas A. and Nathan are looking at pictures on the round table. Nathan is writing sentences on the pictures; Thomas A. is watching. Nathan puts the pages together and staples them to form a book. Thomas A. picks up the book, walks over to the teacher and shows it to her. The teacher reads it and says, "Good job." Nathan has moved to the corner of the room and is now with Jeffrey. They are playing on the rug with a set of plastic figures. Thomas A. has moved to the building table and calls over to Nathan. He asks Nathan to come and play with him. Nathan responds, "No." Thomas A. plays by himself for about three more minutes and moves to the rug with Jeffrey and Nathan. They ignore him; he remains for a few minutes; he then moves to the overhead where Susan is working. Thomas A. stays about a minute, gets up and returns to sit with Jeffrey and Nathan. Thomas A. gets up again and asks, "Where's Andy?" He walks over to Andy who is in the manipulative center. In a couple of minutes Andy leaves and goes to the computer.

The effect on Richard, another child in the low acceptance category, was less noticeable, because of his close friendship with Nathan and Jeffrey. These three boys were frequently together working on activities generally led by Nathan. On the few occasions when Richard was not with Nathan or Jeffrey, Richard was observed exhibiting aggressive behavior. For example, once when Nathan was playing with Jeffrey on the carpet, Richard threw a small plastic building piece at Nathan. On the other hand, when Richard was with Jeffrey or Nathan, he remained engaged in the task until it was complete or until they began another activity. Consequently, Richard was less affected by his peers' low acceptance because he had two friends who usually supplied the desired companionship, thereby providing an anchor for his literacy pursuit.

For some children not being selected as a Best Friend by a high percentage of children did not seem to matter. Susan was one of these children. Only 21% of the children selected her as a Best Friend. She was, however, selected 63% of the time as A Friend and only selected 16% of the time as Not A Friend. Susan was frequently observed working alone on a literacy activity. Even though Susan was one of the youngest children in the class, she was a competent reader and writer. Her own competence appeared to make her self-sufficient in her literacy pursuits. The few times she did seek information, usually requesting how to spell a word, she asked the teacher instead of a peer.

To verify my analysis of the two data sets, I talked with the teacher. First, I called out the list of children's names and asked her to tell me if they appeared to prefer to work alone or with others. I then asked her to tell me which students were self-sufficient, i.e., appeared to prefer to work alone and were capable of performing reading and writing tasks without the assistance of others. Finally, I asked her to identify the children who needed the company of others and also needed the assistance of others to perform reading and writing tasks. In each case the children she identified were the ones revealed in my analyses.

Reflections on the Children's Pursuit of Literacy

The descriptions and discussions reveal several key ways the children in this nongraded, student-centered classroom assisted each other's literacy development. They did get a little help, and in some cases, considerable help from their friends. They sought information, and a peer generally responded. They sought a companion, and one was generally found. In some cases they offered encouragement and also informed each other when an error was made. In addition, in more than half of the interactions, at least one child was older and one possessed more competence in reading and writing.

The negative and positive effects of the friendship patterns in the classroom did intervene in their efforts. Most of the children were involved with other children as they pursued their literacy activities. Some were alone by choice, while others were alone because they were unable to find a peer with whom to interact.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, the behavior of the children in only one classroom was the focus of this study. Their behavior may not represent the behavior found in other classrooms. Another limitation is more time was needed in the classroom. Although definite patterns were evident and efforts were made to confirm the patterns, additional time may have led to the identification of other important patterns and intervening conditions. Finally, the children may have been affected by my presence. Although they were familiar with me, my presence may have altered their behavior in ways not immediately evident.

Concluding Comments

In this nongraded classroom, the children assisted and supported each other's literacy pursuit in a number of ways. It was obvious they benefited from being able to interact with their peers. There is a concern, however, that needs to be considered. In classrooms where friends walk hand-in-hand while pursuing literacy, there are some children who are walking alone, yet need and desire the help of others. Ways to increase the acceptance of these children need to be considered so that the benefits of working with peers can be experienced by all of the children within the classroom.

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Results of Collaboration Between College and Schools with a Parent Involvement Reading Program

Shara B. Curry

Parent involvement programs in local schools are much in demand. Schools showing improvement in reading development can also show increased involvement of parents in the classroom or at home. Most parents are willing to help—not knowing how to help is the problem. Educational institutions need to share what they know about reading and learning to read with parents to help them feel confident in assisting their children. Educators and parents can all observe the results.

Jim Trelease stated in Bernice Cullinan's (1992), *Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read*:

> Children whose parents have taken them to museums and libraries, and to visit relatives in faraway places, invariably have larger vocabularies and interest spans than do children who spend their days monotonously watching four hours of television in the same neighborhood day after day.
>
> Competent readers and writers are no more born than athletes are. Not one player in the National Football League was born wanting to play football. That desire had to be planted by someone—usually a father or uncle, perhaps an older brother. And you can be sure there were little rubber footballs around his home as a child and he was taken to neighborhood playground scrimmages while still a youngster. In each instance, seeds were planted that would someday blossom into a professional athlete (p. 2).

The analogy between the creation of an athlete and the creation of a lifelong reader is obvious. Homes filled with books, either personally owned or borrowed from the library, and all sorts of writing tools, will encourage the growth of competent readers and writers. An important component of this home is an adult who understands the importance of reading aloud from as early an age as six months until the child has grown and left the home.

Reading experts have long encouraged parents to read aloud to their young children. One reason for starting at six months of age is that this is a time when the child begins to associate reading with a sense of peace, comfort, and security (Neuman, 1986). Reading aloud is the best-known, most researched and most frequently recommended parental practice that is significantly related to positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement (Silvern, 1985). However, it cannot be assumed that parents realize what an important role they play in the development of this lifelong skill. While reporting that reading aloud is an enjoyable activity to share with their child, parents also indicate that they are not aware of many of the specific contributions this process makes to their child's development. Many parents are surprised to learn that reading to the child has been shown to significantly increase children's listening and speaking vocabularies, letter and symbol recognition abilities, length of spoken sentences, literal and inferential comprehension skills, number and nature of concepts developed, interest in books and reading, and view of reading as a valued activity (Silvern, 1985). In fact, parents have what may be the most crucial role of all involved in the child's literacy development. Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985) call upon parents to:

> lay the foundation to read . . . [by] informally teaching preschool children about reading and writing by reading aloud to them, discussing stories and events, encouraging them to learn letters and words, and teaching them about the world around them. . . In addition to laying a foundation, parents need to facilitate the growth of their children's reading by taking them to libraries, encouraging reading as a free time activity and supporting homework (p. 57).

With these thoughts in mind, the elementary library coordinator of Warsaw Community Schools in Warsaw, Indiana, set out to support teachers and administrators in strengthening the parent-school bond in working together to create strong, lifelong readers.

Program Development

The elementary library coordinator approached the principal of Atwood Elementary, a small school in the Warsaw School corporation, to discuss the possibilities of a parent education/involvement program at his school. There was already a reading incentive program established at the school, as is common in all of the area schools. The existing program was available for students in all grade levels of the school. The components of the year-round incentive program were mostly classroom or student based, with little inclusion of other members of the families. This was a ripe field for a program that would bring the parents and students to the school at the same time, emphasizing the adult's commitment to reading as a model for the children.

The principal contacted the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. to inquire about the possibilities of funding. He found that acquiring national funding would require a lower-socioeconomic level for the school family as well as being time intensive. He then contacted the Indiana State Department of Education. He was encouraged to write a proposal for a grant from Reading is Fundamental (RIF), which handles the administration of the national endowment money in the state of Indiana. The focus for the granting of funds through this channel is giving books to students to add to home libraries. The books are chosen by the students from a diverse supply provided by the grant funds.

RIF required assurance of local funding in specific increments before grant money would be awarded. Grace College, a small liberal arts college near Warsaw, agreed to become involved by providing that local funding. In addition to funding, the partnership of the local school and the college required committee meetings for planning and book selection, and acquiring copies of the book, *Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read*, by Bernice E. Cullinan (1992) for all participants. Cullinan's's book was distributed to each parent at the beginning of the parent training in reading sessions.

Advantages for a small college becoming involved in such a program were many. First of all, the college had a stake in the future of the students in the local community. Part of our job as members of that community included helping parents understand the importance of reading at home with their children. The parents needed to be aware of the stages to take their children through in order to attain the enjoyment of reading. Fighting illiteracy enriched the livelihood of our small community. Also, this was one way our college could become visible in the community as an institution that had a greater agenda than just being known as the community on the hill. A third advantage was for our students. The college students enrolled in the Children's Literature course could choose to work with this program as fulfillment of a field experience requirement. As future educators, they could learn first-hand the vital importance of including parents in the education of their children, reinforcing the significance of intergenerational literacy.

As one of the last bastions of small rural elementary schools, Atwood Elementary stood as a proud family-oriented place of instruction. With approximately 60 families in the school, a program such as this had the potential for touching almost every family

The program consisted of two separate, but integrated components: distribution of free books for the students and parent training in reading sessions. The students and parents in grades 1-3 were targeted.

Distribution of Free Books

Three distribution dates were established: "Begin Again with a Good Book" (the beginning of second semester), "Don't You Just Love a good Book?" (Valentines Day giveaway); and "Take a Break from School, but not from Reading" (a precursor to spring break).

The committee for the program was composed of the library coordinator, the school librarian, two parents, two teachers, two students, the principal, the college liaison, and two college students. This committee gave suggestions for order the books from the approved lists of vendors provided by RIF. Application had been made for a $500 mini-grant. The approved vendors had agreed to comply with the discount price RIF required for the selected paperback books, with no shipping and handling charge. The other stipulations mandated by the foundation were that the students chose the books and that any remaining books were used in similar give-away programs and were not to be placed in libraries.

Parents and Reading Training Sessions

The RIF program was used as a springboard for the local coordinating team to set up parenting seminars for the families of the students who had received books. The program focused on the Children's Press material, *Parents as Partners in Reading* (Edwards, 1990). After these training sessions, parents and children were encouraged to share the books received at the distribution.

Session One included an overview of the program, introduction of participants, and the viewing of the video, *Jim Trelease and the Read-Aloud Handbook*, which was one of three videos provided with the Children's Press program. Several of the mothers had become familiar with the video during the previous year and were enthusiastic about wanting their husbands to view it. The video made a particularly strong impression on the fathers in attendance.

Grace College students took the responsibility of working with the children in book-related activities. Themes had been developed by the students for each session and reading aloud, art activities, games and songs centered around each theme.

Session Two began with comments and questions from the parents that had formed during the lapse between sessions. The objectives of this session were (a) to help the parents understand the importance of reading, (b) to make parents realize that they were their children's first teachers, (c) to encourage parents to support their children's reading development, and (d) to motivate parents to read to their children.

Preparing for Reading, the second video in the three-video series, was viewed and discussed. During this session, the team and the parents discussed the selection of appropriate books for age level and interests. Along with choosing an appropriate book for reading aloud, the parents also needed to consider planning appropriate times and locations for the shared reading. Reading time was to be quiet, relaxed and uninterrupted. The more pleasant the experience, the more likely the children would want it repeated, which would increase learning about words, language and ideas.

Setting the stage for the reading was mentioned also. Directing attention to interesting pictures in the book, relating the book to the child's experiences, and stressing that this was something the parents would be doing with the children set the tone for this bonding, learning time.

The important roles that researchers have found that parents play in the shared reading event were described. First, the parent was a director, responsible for making the reading session a pleasant, meaningful experience for the child. Next, the parent was a monitor, constantly checking the child's reactions, changing books or reading style if boredom was observed. Third, the parent sometimes became an informer, answering the child's questions. All questions were not to be answered by the parent, as the opportunity needed to be given to stretch the child's mind. The parent could then be instrumental in helping the children find their own answers (Edwards, 1990).

During this training, several parents told of their experiences at home, which led to a rousing session sharing ideas they felt worked and questions they had about how to be more effective.

Session Three began as before, with comments and sharing about what had occurred at home after the previous sessions. Most of the parents had a story to tell about how their children reminded them of their commitment to read aloud every day or about how much the adults were enjoying the books selected by their children.

Reading Strategies, the third video in the series, sparked interest as the coordinators modeled some of the strategies, while recommending some effective, interesting books for shared reading. It was stressed that the time the parents spent at home reading with their children encouraged their children's reading skills to progress and improve for school activities. Allowing them to finish sentences as they reread familiar stories, discussing the story, the pictures and the ideas, and praising the children for each step toward reading mastery all provided positive results for the children as they learned in the school setting.

The following questions for evaluating books were given:

1. Are the illustrations colorful and appealing?

2. Can the print be easily read?

3. Is the language natural?

4. Is the story or information worth reading?

5. Is this a book both of you will enjoy?

Many books were shared by the librarians and college faculty that could be selected for shared reading. This became one of the favorite events of the parents, especially when they had time to examine the selections after the training session.

Suggestions for finding new books also were discussed: (a) ask other parents what books they are reading, (b) ask librarians and teachers to suggest the more popular ones, (c) ask bookstore sales people what books are best sellers, and (d) ask your child to name a book he likes and then try to find a similar one or one written by the same author.

Conclusion

The parents at Atwood Elementary enjoyed involvement in activities with their children and were very supportive of school programs. This program was no exception, with 45 parents attending the three sessions, which represented 30% of the school population. The principal considered this a successful initiative. Parents reported that the books their children selected from the free distribution became valued possessions and encouraged the purchase of others. The parents did not realize that they were welcome in the school library and could select books to check out for home use. They began to take advantage of this opportunity, allowing them to make their home more literacy-rich. The town of Atwood does not have a public library, and since they are in a different township than Warsaw, the large library located there was not available to the residents without prohibitive cost for a library card. The parents learned that they could use the card belonging to the Warsaw School Corporation to borrow books from the Warsaw Public Library. Here was another open door allowing for a variety of reading material.

The collaboration between the school and the college was a bonding affair, with the college students enjoying the time so much that many returned to the school to read and interact with the students in the classrooms. Thus, all those involved reaped positive benefits in understanding parental roles of importance in the reading process, which helped lead to the construction of lifelong readers in this small rural community.

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The Effects of Read-Along Tapes on the Reading Comprehension of Middle School Students

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The utilization of read-along materials in listening centers has been acknowledged as a strategy compatible with the whole language philosophy. Read-along packages, books with accompanying cassette recordings of the texts, have been marketed with increasing frequency with longer and more difficult selections for middle school and older students. The question of just how effective these materials might be with different types of students has not been fully answered.

Significance of the Investigation

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of providing auditory narration of text during silent reading on below average, average, and above average eighth-grade readers. Does this procedure help the weaker readers comprehend? Would this procedure interfere with more gifted readers' comprehension? Such a study has value for classroom teachers because conclusions and recommendations might help address the large range of achievement levels typically found within an eighth-grade middle school classroom.

Another significant issue is the matter of accommodating individual differences in learning styles. Would others get consistent results with Carbo (1978) who found that remediation with second through fifth grade student's recorded books yield positive results in reading? Bowman and Davey (1986) studied the effects of presentation mode on comprehension monitoring of learning disabled students in grades 9 through 12. Silent reading was compared to silent reading while listening. The authors stated that the multi-modal presentation seemed to depress the scores of these learning disabled high school students. These researchers suggested that the confusion and interference created by the input from two modalities simultaneously led to the decrease in comprehension. Therefore, if those with one learning style benefit from this type of instruction, do those with another learning style suffer a decline?

These issues require a more comprehensive review of the literature to yield insights into the effectiveness of the strategy of read-along tapes.

Review of Literature

Extensive research during the 1950s and 1960s led to better insights into the relationship between listening and reading. Devine (1978) concluded that listening and reading share a common thinking base. Both listening and reading are receptive language skills that share the common goal of comprehending meaning. Devine pointed out that instruction can take advantage of this common base by utilizing strategies that have applications to both reading and listening, such as teaching inferencing.

Durrell (1969) concluded that listening vocabulary was superior to reading vocabulary at the lower grades but that reading and listening vocabularies become somewhat equal around eighth-grade level.

Sticht and James (1984) concluded from an analysis of 44 studies that the gap between the two skills gradually narrowed and agreed with Durrell that around the seventh or eighth grades the reading and listening abilities become similar. Sticht and James (1984) also advised that reading instruction should include activities that bridge the gap between listening and reading. Miller and Smith (1990) examined silent reading, oral reading, and listening proficiency of poor, average, and good readers. Their study of subjects in grades 3 through 5 indicated differences by ability level for listening and reading. For poor readers, they found that oral reading and listening comprehension were both superior to silent reading.

Homan, Hall, and Topping (1986) reported results of a wide-scale project that involved 4000 fifth-grade students in testing that provided for oral reading of standardized test items to both good and poor readers. The findings showed that having teachers read test items aloud yielded higher scores than having students read items silently. Both good and poor readers reflected similar gains.

In another comparison between standardized testing and listening-reading testing, Edwards (1970) found that fourth- and sixth-grade students who were poor readers gained significantly. Edwards suggested that the read-along method should be limited to the few students who might benefit from the strategy.

Holmes and Allison (1985) showed that subjects in their study, 48 fifth-grade students, did not benefit from the listening-while-reading treatment. Furthermore, good readers seemed to be negatively affected by the listening-while-reading tasks.

Klein (1989) compared the performances of sixth-grade subjects in three test modalities: listening, silent reading, and reading-while-listening. The study tested specifically for inferencing skills in social studies content. Klein found that the listening-while-reading strategy produced more correct inferences than silent reading or listening.

None of these studies dealt with the problem of eighth-grade readers reading significantly below and above their grade norms. The current study sheds light on whether or not these readers will be helped in making inferences in reading comprehension.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were chosen from a middle school in a large district of upstate South Carolina. The school had a faculty of 63 teachers and 1,100 students in grades six through eight.

Participation in the study was limited to 60 students chosen from eighth-grade classes in literature and language arts. All students with scores at or below the fourth stanine in reading comprehension as measured by the eighth edition of the *Stanford Achievement Test*, Form L, were grouped as below average readers. Students with scores in the fifth stanine were designated average readers. Students with scores in or above the sixth stanine were categorized as above average readers. For each of the three populations of students, 20 subjects were selected randomly. These students were invited to participate in the research study. All of the students selected in the sampling process participated voluntarily in the project.

Materials and Procedure

For the testing procedure, reading selections and questions on the third edition of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests*, Level 5/6, Form L, were read orally and recorded on audio-cassette. A pilot test was administered to evaluate adequacy of pause-time allotted for marking answer sheets. After necessary revisions, the audio-cassettes were produced.

The first task had the 60 subjects complete the comprehension subtest of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests*, Level 5/6, Form K, by reading silently (MacGinitie & MacGinitie, 1989). For the listening task, the 60 subjects completed the comprehension subtest of the third edition of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests*, Level 5/6, Form L, by reading the material silently while listening to simultaneous narration of the selections and questions on audio-cassette. Testing in both modes was untimed. The subjects listened to the narration through earphones as they followed the printed material visually. They were allowed to rewind the tape and listen again to any of the material if they wished.

Results

Table 1 gives the means, standard deviations, and *t*-test results for the below average readers, the average readers, and the above average readers.

Table 1

Mean Gates-MacGinitie Scores and Standard Deviations of Groups by Ability Levels

Group[a]	Mean	SD
Below Average Reader		
Reading Silently	30.85	7.25
Reading & Listening	30.90	6.35
Average Reader		
Reading Silently	35.85	5.94
Reading & Listening	34.40	4.72
Above Average Reader		
Reading Silently	40.20	4.71
Reading & Listening	38.45	4.76

[a] n=20

For those below average readers, the mean scores for each task, reading and reading while listening, were almost identical. A t-test for dependent means showed no significant difference ($t(19)=.04$, $p=>.05$) between the two means. For the average readers, the mean score for listening while reading was not significantly different ($t(19)=1.16$, $p\text{-}>.05$) from the mean score for reading silently. However, with the above average readers, the mean score for listening while reading was statistically significant ($t(19)=2.75$, $p=<.001$), and was significantly lower than silent reading. Therefore, listening while reading not only failed to enhance reading comprehension overall for any of the three groups, it actually interfered and resulted in lower comprehension for the group of above average readers.

Table 2 includes all the students within the below average, average, and above average groups whose scores increased, decreased, or remained the same when reading and listening simultaneously. Notice that as many scores of students in the below average group dropped significantly while listening as those of students whose scores increased. In the average and above average groups, many more students' scores decreased significantly than those of students whose scores increased.

Table 2

***t*-tests for Difference between Groups Whose Scores Increased, Decreased, or Remained the Same**

	Reading		Reading & Listening			
Group	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	n	*t*
			Below Average Reader			
Increased	28.44	8.22	33.56	6.27	9	-4.16*
Decreased	34.22	4.76	29.22	5.47	9	12.25*
No Change	26.50	9.19	26.50	9.19	2	-
			Average Reader			
Increased	31.67	8.80	36.83	6.27	6	-5.60**
Decreased	37.58	3.37	32.58	3.78	12	6.27*
No Change	38.00	2.83	38.00	2.83	2	-
			Above Average Readers			
Increased	36.00	4.32	38.25	4.11	4	-4.70**
Decreased	40.31	4.23	36.92	4.15	13	6.44*
No Change	45.33	.58	45.33	.58	3	-

*$p<.001$

**$p<.05$

It is important that the below average readers did have a higher percentage of students gaining in comprehension when reading and listening when compared to average and above average readers. Conversely, the average and above average readers had more students declining in achievement when reading and listening as compared to those just reading.

Another important finding was that the people who benefited the most in each group from listening were the ones who scored the lowest in reading. According to Table 2, the students in each group whose score increased while listening were students with lower initial mean scores.

One other interesting finding was that both increases and decreases in students' score while listening were more substantial with below average and average readers. Notice in Table 2 that the scores of students in the above average group did not change much either way. However, the mean gain or loss for the below average or average readers was five points.

Table 3 shows that the 19 students in all 3 groups whose scores increased while reading and listening did so significantly. However, the 34 students in all 3 groups whose scores decreased while reading and listening did so significantly as well. Almost twice as many students' scores decreased as those whose score increased while reading and listening. Table 3 also reveals that the initial mean score for reading was lower for the 19 students whose scores increased when listening was added. Note that the 34 students whose scores decreased when listening was added to reading had a higher initial mean score for reading. Could it be that the benefits of auditory input decrease as reading competency improves?

Table 3

***t*-tests for Mean Differences**

	Reading		Reading & Listening			
Group	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	n	*t*
Increased	31.05	7.98	35.58	5.76	19	-5.51*
Decreased	37.74	4.67	33.35	5.31	34	11.60*
No Change	37.86	9.36	37.86	9.36	7	-

*$p=<.001$

Discussion

The finding that a substantial number of students' scores declined in comprehension when reading and listening simultaneously to audiocassettes raises questions as to the appropriateness of using this strategy with all students in classes who are heterogeneous in reading achievement levels. The findings lead us to suggest that listening while reading strategies, although inappropriate perhaps for use with an entire class, might hold significant benefit for a particular group of students within the class. The findings also lead us to suggest that the students who might benefit the most are those who are less competent in reading. Score decreases when listening is added become increasingly likely as the level of reading achievement climbs.

An important finding was that although comprehension enhancement while reading and listening is more likely to be found in below average and average readers, there is a substantial risk of comprehension decline. This enhancement or decline may be more significant for the less able readers. Assessments of individual strengths and weaknesses will probably be required if this listening while reading strategy is to be used with maximum benefit. There are individual students within all three achievement levels who have the potential to improve reading comprehension by utilizing listening while reading strategies.

This study raised several more questions. For example, what differences might be found when students are observed in recreational reading situations as compared to testing situations? What differences might be found if students were tested through think-alouds or retellings rather than the traditional testing such as the Gates-MacGinitie? Are the differences observed in these groups of students explained by modality preferences, cognitive levels, attitudes toward the task, or other factors?

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Authentic Assessment and Literacy Instruction: Exactly Where Are We?

Karen Ford, Cindy Gillespie, Alex Leavell, Janet Powell, Ralph Gillespie, Jill Miels

A recent radio talk show provided a forum for a local parent organization to express its concern over the various "new age" elements that have slowly worked their way into the assessment and instructional systems of our public school classrooms. From the moment the host introduced the parent representative, the listening audience was treated to a barrage of statements and accusations aimed at discrediting, among other things, the potential role of authentic assessment in the literacy development or instruction of their children. Portfolios were described as ". . . being from the devil . . ." while authentic assessment in general was touted as "too subjective . . ." and simply "another way to force teacher values on . . . unsuspecting populations" of our classrooms. The speaker was articulate and his argument was quite detailed. Curiously enough however, nearly every statement that he made was in direct contradiction to what *we* believed to be true about authentic assessment.

Continued amazement over this incident sparked a series of ongoing conversations with colleagues and classroom teachers about this "new age" assessment and where these parents could have found the information that they were building into their arguments and accusations. Unfortunately, these conversations revealed an equally curious vision of authentic assessment. These individuals, faced with a state mandate to integrate portfolio assessment, had either read or been told that portfolios were "supposed to take the place of all grades" and that portfolio assessment always required at least "two to three hours of work after school . . ." These individuals had also been informed that "portfolios would revolutionize instruction in their classrooms . . ." and they were in a state of panic about having to "totally change the way they had been teaching for the last ten years . . ." Wrestling with these issues and what we perceived as an ever growing cloud of misinterpretation, we began to question the information that educators were being exposed to; the same information that we researchers or writers were creating for them. Were *we* actually the culprits in this situation? Concerned, or perhaps guilt-ridden, we turned to the literature in an effort to determine exactly what literacy educators were reading and writing about authentic assessment.

Method

This study was designed to investigate the literature relating to authentic assessment in literacy instruction and development. The literature examined was taken from the last five years (1989-1994) of journals or magazines that a group of literacy educators representing various levels identified as their favorites or most common sources of information. A random sampling of the membership from both a state and several local literacy-oriented professional organizations identified approximately 50 individuals who responded to informal interviews regarding the sources of information that they typically used "to learn more about instruction and assessment of literacy skills." This sampling of individuals indicated that time constraints and availability of materials forced them to primarily use magazines and journals in gathering this information. The individuals were asked to name the three magazines or journals where they typically found useful information. A tally of their responses indicated approximately twenty different titles of magazines or journals and identified fourteen commonly names titles.

The elementary literacy educators identified *Learning Magazine*, *Instructor*, *The Reading Teacher*, and *Language Arts* as their favorite sources. Secondary literacy educators indicated *The English Journal* and *The Journal of Reading* as their primary sources. College and university literacy educators identified a variety of resources which included those previously listed as well as *The Journal of Developmental Education*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *Teaching English in a Two Year College*, and the yearbooks from the American Reading Forum, College Reading Association, and national Reading Conference.

A total of 85 articles was identified through both hand and computer search initially using the descriptor of *authentic assessment* and later, due to insufficient findings, the terms*alternative assessment* and*portfolio assessment*. Once identified, each article was read and summarized with regard to the following areas: (a) definition of authentic assessment; (b) description of authentic assessment; strengths of the assessment; (c) strengths of assessment; (d) weaknesses of the assessment; (e) conclusions or implications about the assessment. This information was further analyzed according to the target audience (elementary, secondary, and college or university) in an effort to provide a synthesized view of what each group was being exposed to.

Findings

The Elementary Literacy Educators

The literature drawn from the journals identified by the elementary literacy educators provided us with, perhaps, the largest informational base. Nearly half of the articles (43) came from these journals. In terms of content, only five of the articles directly addressed the topic of authentic assessment; the majority of the articles focused on some aspect of portfolio assessment.

Throughout the articles, authentic assessment was described as an attempt to integrate the instruction and assessment of reading and writing with more realistic activities that would be considered typical of something students might do in real life (Farr, 1992; Gomez, Grave, & Block, 1991). The extent of the "real life" experience ranged from tasks which simulated situations beyond the classroom to those which more closely matched typical classroom learning experiences, *not* test experiences (Farr, 1992; Gomez, et al., 1991; Hiebert & Hutchison, 1991). Clearly, these tasks stressed higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills (Hiebert & Hutchison, 1991). The authenticity of the task was measured in terms of the degree to which it reflected real life reading and writing situations (Kapinus, 1994).

In a majority of the articles, portfolio assessment was used synonymously with authentic assessment and embodied many realistic or authentic tasks. Descriptions of the portfolio process maintained that portfolios were basically collections of work representing both the processes and products of student reading and writing (Koskinen, Valencia, & Place, 1994; Hansen, 1992; Jongsma, 1989). They were also viewed as holding places for thorough documentation of many kinds of data representing a wide variety of tasks (Linear, 1991).

While the structure or actual process of portfolio assessment varied from situation to situation, several common themes were evident throughout the articles. The portfolio process was seen as a catalyst for: encouraging student involvement in learning and assessment; promoting student growth in terms of literacy skills and instigating a closer relationship among curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Koskinen, et al., 1994).

Although the articles tended to portray a positive picture of the portfolio process several negative points continued to surface. Perhaps the most urgent issue was the concern for proper implementation of the portfolio process. Effective portfolio assessment requires considerable amounts of time for conferencing with students, encouraging their self-reflection, and managing the paper load (Farr, 1992; Gomez, et al., 1991; Hiebert & Hutchinson, 1991; Johnston, Nolan, & Berry, 1993). Added to this time element is the need for the teachers' thorough understanding of how the process should work (Farr, 1992). Without the necessary support from the administrative standpoint, it was suggested that the portfolio process could not be effectively implemented and would not yield reliable results and might end up as another pre-packaged product (Farr, 1992; Gomez, et al., 1991; Koskinen, et al., 1994; Valencia, 1990).

The Secondary Literacy Educators

The literature drawn from the journals identified by the secondary literacy educators provided us with a smaller, but more diversified picture of authentic assessment. There was a balance in topic coverage with nearly half of the fifteen articles addressing other kinds of authentic assessment than the portfolio.

Authentic assessment was portrayed in these articles as representative of a paradigm shift away from the standardized test syndrome with the newer approaches reflecting: (a) production of answers rather than recognition of answers; (b) broad based projects rather than single item tasks; and (c) informed judgment of products rather than mechanical scoring of answers (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993). The literature identified several different types of authentic assessment which illustrated these trends. Terms like "transformative testing" (Rea & Thompson, 1990, p. 9), "action beyond analysis" (Flood, Lapp & Nagel, 1993, p. 420), "dynamic assessment" (Kletzian & Bednar, 1990, p. 528), and "interactive assessment" (Brozo, 1990, p. 522) were used to describe methods of assessment which utilize real world situations or tasks that encourage students to think at higher levels and apply their knowledge.

Portfolio assessment was occasionally represented as a kind of authentic assessment and the descriptions tended to reinforce the trend toward realistic tasks that demanded higher order thinking on the part of the students. In the portfolio process students were depicted as active learners and questioning thinkers (Valeri-Gold, Olson, & Deming, 1991/1992). The portfolios contained a variety of items that were easily accessible to both student and teacher for on-going reflection or assessment (Stahle & Mitchell, 1993; Cooper & Brown, 1992).

The concerns about authentic and portfolio assessment in this literature seemed to mirror those expressed in the journals identified by the elementary literacy educators. The element of time was identified as a critical factor. There was a concern that without sufficient time, teachers might have to shorten or eliminate conferencing with students, thus reducing the potential that portfolio assessment has for student-teacher interaction and feedback (Cooper & Brown, 1992; Stahle & Mitchell, 1993). Further, without the time necessary for developing a thorough understanding of the portfolio process, teachers might be tempted to "buy into" a standardized or packaged approach and ultimately lose the authenticity of the press (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993; Kletzian & Bednar, 1990; MacGinitie, 1993).

The College/University Literacy Educators

The literature drawn from the sources identified by the college and university literacy educators provided us with some surprising results. With the extensive resource base we believed that we would be inundated with articles on the topic; however our search revealed only 27 articles. Of these 27 articles, only one addressed the issue of authentic assessment. The remaining articles described a variety of research projects and experiences with portfolio assessment.

The lone article on authentic assessment approached the topic from a theoretical perspective and developed an argument about the nature of authenticity. In line with the information from the secondary literacy educators resources, this article suggested that authentic assessment demands some contextualized or problematic situation where the student is forced to determine what strategies or actions are needed to address the issue (Myers, 1991). Going beyond this somewhat accepted level of information, the article suggested that many school related activities like workbook pages are actually authentic activities for school situations and questioned whether they could then be classified as authentic assessments (Myers, 1991). The article called for a clarification of the term *authentic assessment*, both at the theoretical and semantic levels.

The treatment of portfolio assessment in this literature followed, as expected, a more experimental mode. Most of the articles described situations where educators from various levels had experimented with portfolio assessment in their classrooms. The experiences described were similar to those found in the literature of the two previous groups; the same kinds of items were collected and similar processes for student self-reflection and conferencing were followed. Portfolios were found to be useful tools for demonstrating student progress in reading and writing (Moje, Brozo & Haas, 1994) and for empowering the student as a learner (Metzger & Bryant, 1993). Their descriptions ranged from a multidimensional system for evaluating literacy development within the learning environment (Harlin, Lipa & Phelps, 1992) to a "better way of looking at what my kids do . . . a better report card" (Flood, et al., 1992, p. 125).

In spite of the positive representation of the portfolio process this literature did address concerns similar to those expressed in the literature of the two previous groups. The process was described as labor intensive (Harlin, et al., 1992) and the concern for the increased work load (Christian, 1993) reiterated the critical issue of time; time to manage the process itself, the data (Viechnicki, Barbour & Shaklee, 1993), the reflection, and the conferencing (Flood, et al., 1992). In line with this issue of time was a call for support from districts (Dewitz, Carr, Palm & Spencer, 1992). It was suggested that without support for inservice time to learn about the process (Harlin, et al., 1992) and sufficient time to engage in various management activities (Flood, et al., 1992) teachers might become discouraged and eventually abandon a potentially useful instructional and assessment tool.

Discussion

Without a doubt, the most surprising finding of this investigation was the overwhelming equation of portfolio assessment *as* authentic assessment and not merely a *kind* of authentic assessment. We had anticipated the discussions of authenticity and the suggestions of contextualized situations where students engaged in problem solving, but we had not expected the literature to create a situation where individuals might perceive the portfolio as the only means for authentic assessment.

Clearly, the portfolio process is grounded in the nature of authentic assessment. Portfolios provide an opportunity for students to utilize higher level thinking skills in a variety of classroom learning experiences (Farr, 1992; Gomez, et al., 1991; Hiebert & Hutchison, 1991).

Portfolios lend themselves to broad based projects and the production of information through the writing process and student self-reflection (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993). The assessment of portfolios involves informed judgment on the part of both student and teacher (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993). All of these criteria suggest that portfolio assessment adheres to suggested guidelines for authentic assessment, but they don't indicate that the portfolio process is the *only* measure of authentic assessment.

As we reflected on the talk show incident and our subsequent conversations with literacy educators, it became somewhat easier to imagine where or how these arguments developed. Many of the concerns expressed by the talk show guest and classroom teachers were represented in the literature and the accompanying explanations divergent enough to warrant much of this confusion or misinterpretation. It would seem that we researchers and writers have less than universal understandings of the concepts and if we educators have somewhat clouded areas of interpretation, then the less informed public is likely to as well. Perhaps Myers (1991) was right and what we need is not *more* illustrations of authentic assessment, but a more concerted effort at clarifying to ourselves and others exactly what we mean by authentic assessment.

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Creating an Informal Reading-*Thinking* Inventory

Anthony V. Manzo, Ula Manzo, Michael McKenna

Practically Speaking

This paper describes options for a departure from current informal testing practices in reading. It will be easier to follow the justification and means to exercise these options if you first consider two vignettes that highlight practical applications.

- Todd, a fifth grader, has never had trouble reading. He typically scores well on standardized tests and is able to answer most questions posed by Ms. Reese, his teacher, during discussions of reading selections. Ms. Reese is often surprised, however, at Todd's reticence whenever those discussions become more open-ended and thoughtful and opinions are encouraged. At those times, Todd generally has little to say.

- Lakesha, Todd's classmate, has struggled with reading and has a history of placement in remedial programs. She often stumbles over words and clearly labors over assigned selections. However, after class discussions have provided her with the gist of what her abler classmates have read, she seems to blossom. Her contributions to the give-and-take of what is said are intelligent, pointed, and insightful. Ms. Reese is also puzzled by Lakesha, for she is, after all, a "remedial reader."

With Todd and Lakesha to provide context, consider now, a formula for an Informational Reading-*Thinking* Inventory (IR-TI). This formula has been many years in development (Manzo & Casale, 1983; Manzo & Manzo, 1991; Manzo & McKenna, 1993; Manzo, Manzo, & McKenna, 1995). This doesn't mean that it is a completed story, merely one that is ready to be told because assessment of comprehension and related thinking functions has remained largely unchanged since the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) first was described by Emmett Betts (1946) in the mid 1940s.

Rationale for An Informal Reading-Thinking Inventory

The Informal Reading-*Thinking* Inventory formula presented here offers some relatively simple ways to enhance the assessment capacity of the conventional IRI. These are easily adaptable to nearly any textual material and to most commercially produced IRIs. The basic objective of the IR-TI is to help teachers and remedial specialists to more effectively assess thinking while reading and to become attuned to some of its more constructive aspects. These elements of reading are potentially of great value in promoting higher-order literacy, since they have tended to reveal strengths that have been overlooked and some weaknesses that have tended to go unaddressed. Hence, the IR-TI can be heuristic or means by which teachers and the profession might tangibly identify, and thus further discover, understand, and address, the constructive dimensions of reading and thinking. The expectation that such discoveries and changes should occur is given a boost by research findings that show that the simple act of altering teachers' questions (one of the chief objectives of the IR-TI) also alters their feedback and discussion practices, and that alterations in student behavior and learning soon follow (O'Flahavan, Hartman & Pearson, 1988; Ruddell, 1990).

IR-TI Compared with the IRI

The IR-TI formula is developed and detailed in two ways: as it compares with most conventional IRIs and by an illustrated example. Field trials and empirical findings related to the tangible values of the new format are provided along the way.

The IR-TI, like the IRI, is an individually administered diagnostic test. However, it is designed not merely to assess literal and simple inferential comprehension but also higher-order comprehension and even some aspects of language proficiency and personal-social adjustment. In other words, it attempts to assess *reading of the lines, reading between the lines,* and for the first time, *reading beyond the lines.* The IR-TI, like the IRI, should be structured as a diagnostic conversation between a teacher and a student. Any part of the format or routine for administration which threatens to seriously detract from this procedure should be set aside. In most respects the structure, administration, and interpretation of most of the IR-TI is very similar to that of a conventional IRI with the following exceptions:

1. Most IRIs have very fixed procedures and quantitative scoring. The IR-TI is more open-ended and intentionally probing. It uses both quantitative and qualitative scoring.

2. In most conventional IRIs, the examiner makes a brief statement about the content of each passage before asking the student to read it. In the IR-TI, and in a few commercially prepared IRIs, the examiner asks the student a question designed to elicit relevant background information and hence activate appropriate schemata to read these otherwise non-connected passages (see Figure 1).

3. In most IRIs the examiner does not try to establish student level of interest and motivation. In the IR-TI students are asked whether they think they will enjoy reading (or listening) to the remainder of the selection. This permits teachers and students to judge performance against likely levels of interest and motivation.

4. In most IRIs the examiner begins immediately to ask reconstructive (recall and recognition type) comprehension questions following reading/listening. In an IR-TI, the first question the examiner asks following reading/listening is this constructive one: "How much did you like/enjoy this (selection/story)?" Answers can be given on a 5-point scale from *very little* to *very much.*

5. In most IRIs questions are scored as correct or incorrect. In an IR-TI, there are other qualitative evaluations of student responses that may be undertaken. For example, correct answers can be given extra credit when they are exceptionally full or detailed. These we simply mark with a "D" and then note the number of Ds accumulated throughout testing. Incorrect answers also are evaluated as being congruent or incongruent with the question asked. Incongruent responses are marked with a minus (-) sign and congruent ones with a plus (+) sign. This congruency measure can be an important and sensitive indication of engagement with the task at hand. It has been found, for example, that remedial students answer from 20% to 45% of their teacher's questions with totally incongruent or "off the wall"

Figure 1.

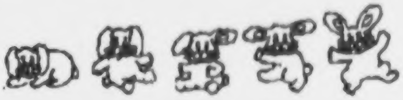
Format Example of an Informal Reading-Thinking Inventory

MOTIVATION/SCHEMA ACTIVATION

What does a shepherd do?

Now you are going to listen to a story about a shepherd boy who got in the habit of telling lies. Then I will ask you some questions about what you have heard and what you thought about it.

(EV) 1. How much did you enjoy this story? Point to the picture that is closest to the way you feel.
(Show student the "rating card" provided with the test materials, reproduced below. Briefly review the
student's choice.)



very little	little	half & half	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5

READING THE LINES

Guidelines for Recording Student Responses:
In the "Score" column, record "0" for incorrect or "1" for correct answers. In the "Value" column, record a minus sign (-) for any responses that are clearly incongruent, or illogical, and record a plus sign (+) for any responses that are exceptionally full or detailed.

Score Value

(F) 2. What was the shepherd boy's job
(taking care of the sheep)

-- ----- -----

(F) 3. What idea did he think of as a way to have fun?
(tricking the villagers by pretending that a wolf was attacking the sheep)

-- ----- -----

(F) 4. What did the villagers do when the boy first shouted "wolf"?
(they came running to help)

-- ----- -----

Score Value

(V) 5. What does the word "hoax" mean in this passage?
(a trick or a joke)

-- ----- -----

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Score Value

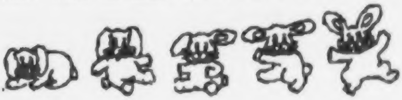
(I) 6. Did the villagers think that a wolf might harm the sheep?
(yes -- that's why they came running when the boy called.)

-- ----- -----

(I) 7. Why didn't the villagers come when the wolf was really killing the sheep?
(they couldn't believe the boy when he finally told the truth)

-- ----- -----

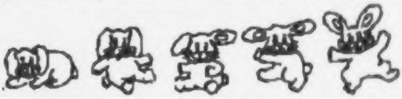
(M) 8. How well do you think you answered these factual questions? Point to the picture that is closest to the way you think you answered. *(Show student the "rating card," reproduced below. Circle the number of the student's choice.*



poorly not well half & half well very well

1 2 3 4 5

(EV) 9. Tell how much you agree with this statement -- *"Trust is more important than fun"* -- point to the picture that shows the way you feel:
(The student's explanation should indicate that fun is important, but trust is more so, and that it is possible to have fun without destroying trust.)



very little little half & half much very much

1 2 3 4 5

Score Value

-- ----- -----

Score Value

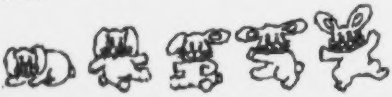
(AC)10. Why is it important not to tell lies?
(Score any of the following answers correct, as well as any other reasonable answers the student gives.) ----- -----

____ People may not help you when you need it, because they won't know you really do.
____ People won't believe you.
____ People won't like you.
____ Nothing works well when we lose trust in each other.
____ Other ____

(AC)11. This fable is sometimes called "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." When might might you say someone is "crying wolf", based on this fable?
(when calling for help and it isn't really needed: false alarms)

-- ----- -----

(M) 12. How well do you think you answered the last two questions? Point to the picture that is closest to the way you think you answered. *(Show student the "rating card," reproduced below.)*



poorly not well half & half well very well

1 2 3 4 5

(OE)13. What might the shepherd boy do, now that no one believes him any more?
(Build new trust by saying he is sorry, and then doing good deeds)

Score Value

Oral response notes: ----- -----

____

14. **Optional**: Following a brief discussion of question #13, ask the student to write his/her answer on a separate sheet of paper. ----- -----

Illustration from: Manzo A. V. and Manzo U. C. (1993) pp 468-71

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responses (Manzo, 1969a). In other words, they are hardly engaged, and therefore, cannot possibly begin to learn. Hence, the congruency score is a sensitive measure that can detect growth that may not yet be reflected in conventional reading scores. We expect, for example, that Lakesha would show considerable growth in congruency if she were to be taught with robust pre-reading, or front-loading methods such as ReQuest (Manzo, 1969b) and K-W-L Plus (Carr & Ogle, 1987).

6. In an IRI students are not asked to be introspective about their reading and thinking. In an IR-TI, students are asked how well they think they have answered the questions posed (see Figure 1). This metacognitive or comprehension awareness (Pressley, Ghatala, Woloshyn & Pierie, 1990) measure then can be compared with the pupils' actual performance on each set of questions asked. We are still learning much about the best ways to do this comparison. Thus far, it seems adequate to simply evaluate students' self-appraisals as unacceptable or acceptable (see figure 1). Teachers have found it useful to probe students for explanations of the reasons for their self-appraisals. This probing has tended to create think-alouds that can reveal much about students' thought processes when engaged in evaluative thinking, one of the highest levels of cognitive functioning.

7. The conventional IRI-type comprehension questions include literal, some inferential, and virtually no applied, critical, or creative levels of responding. In the IR-TI format higher-order questions are systematically asked to tap into the beyond-the-lines levels of reading. The addition of these non-text-specific questions is the heart of the IR-TI.

8. The IRI does not require writing. The IR-TI includes an optional question or two designed to invite a writing sample related to the reading passage. The writing sample can be evaluated with any one of several rubrics, depending on a teacher's purpose(s) and objective(s). (For a particularly compatible means of evaluating writing see the "Informal Writing Inventory" in Manzo & Manzo, 1993).

9. IRI passages tend to be one dimensional and inane. IR-TI selections include excerpts from brief, but complete, fables as well as conventional stories and nonfiction prose. When it is clear that a student already knows a certain fable, questioning is completed and the examiner goes on to another less known fable. Fables offer a significant advantage in assessing higher-order reading. They allow for the easy assessment of thinking because they are a story within a

story, or a metaphoric meaning that needs to be constructively abstracted from a literal storyline. Fables also are inherently more culturally fair, because although they come from diverse cultures, fables do not reflect a single cultural heritage as do most story narratives found in basals and on traditional comprehension tests. (See Figure 2). Note, too, that teachers are encouraged to add other selections to the mix that may serve some specific need or purpose (e.g., selections of comparable difficulty increasing in syntactical demand, or ones with several characters to be developed).

10. The IRI typically is administered in one sitting, whereas a full IR-TI need not be given in one sitting. It is permissable to establish an instructional level with the conventional questions for quick placement, and then to come back and have a pupil re-read passages in order to conduct a fuller inquiry. This is justifiable because thinking often benefits from lapsed time (given reasonable context and prompts), whereas comprehension based on recall begins to fade immediately and all but vanishes in as little as a few hours.

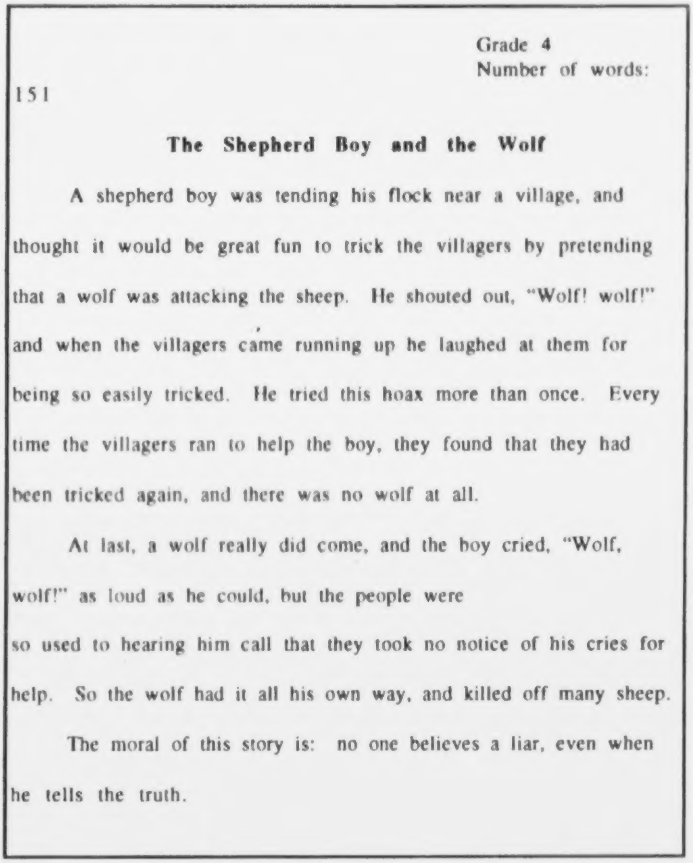
Effects of the IR-TI on Student Placement Levels

Consider now some further points of interest that we have learned in using this more organic formula. In one study, we used the IRI-type questions on the IR-TI to determine independent, instructional and frustration levels on a great number of students. These scores then were combined with each pupil's performance on the higher-order literacy questions, and placement levels were re-estimated. This time, about 45% of students' reading levels changed up or down by at least one category (Ratanakarn, 1992). This shifting strongly suggests that there are some seemingly proficient readers, such as Todd, with good conventional literal comprehension who tend to have difficulties with some higher-order functions. These difficulties include problems such as making connections among text-based ideas connecting reading to prior experiences and a disinclination to think critically and creatively about what has been read. By the same token, we repeatedly find that approximately 15% of seemingly remedial-level readers, like Lakesha, do make appropriate connections and critical/creative responses and, therefore, have strengths in their thought processes and potential to think and to learn that may exceed their apparently depressed literal comprehension scores (Casale, 1980; Ratanakarn, 1992).

For these reasons, it seems that the IR-TI format is better suited to uncovering strengths as well as weaknesses. However, since it is more time intensive, it probably is best used when teachers feel the need for

Figure 2.

Format Example of an Informal Reading-Thinking Inventory



Grade 4
Number of words:
151

The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

A shepherd boy was tending his flock near a village, and thought it would be great fun to trick the villagers by pretending that a wolf was attacking the sheep. He shouted out, "Wolf! wolf!" and when the villagers came running up he laughed at them for being so easily tricked. He tried this hoax more than once. Every time the villagers ran to help the boy, they found that they had been tricked again, and there was no wolf at all.

At last, a wolf really did come, and the boy cried, "Wolf, wolf!" as loud as he could, but the people were so used to hearing him call that they took no notice of his cries for help. So the wolf had it all his own way, and killed off many sheep.

The moral of this story is: no one believes a liar, even when he tells the truth.

further information. The IR-TI, as described here, would be most suitable for identifying students suspected of being more advanced thinkers than their decoding and literal comprehension would suggest and for better understanding the needs of students suspected of being mechanistic thinkers, functionally below their seemingly proficient reading levels.

Whole Language/Whole Child

The IR-TI is compatible with several basic whole-language, and what we would call, *whole-child* objectives (Manzo & Manzo, 1995). We say this because the IR-TI: (a) attempts to look at the reader as well as his or her reading; (b) involves reading, listening, speaking, and writing; (c) invites subjective as well as objective involvement and assessment; and (d) attempts to connect teacher, students, and textual material one to another.

The IR-TI, in effect, is a workbench where teachers' understandings of individual children and their respective instructional needs can be gleaned and then cross-verified with classroom observations. In this way, the IR-TI formula offers hope of bringing about more widespread and lasting attention to higher-order reading and thinking in our nation's classrooms. Additionally, the IR-TI seems to open some new vistas in the diagnosis and remediation of what might be called higher-order literacy dysfunctions. The field has paid little attention to these possibilities since Moe and Nania (1959) studied inflexible reading rates in otherwise able readers. For a quick summary of the main points of the IR-TI formula, see Figure 3.

Figure 3.

Quick Summary of IR-TI Formula and Some Options

1. Add pre-reading questions to activate appropriate schemata and to estimate pupils' interest, and likely level of engagement, in a particular reading selection.

2. Be sure that the first, post-reading question is constructive in nature (and able to confirm interest and engagement): "How much did you like/enjoy this selection/story?"

3. Note answers for *detail* - or elaboration, and for *congruency*, as well as whether simply correct or incorrect.

4. Organize questions into sets designed to seriously tap all three levels of reading: *the lines, between the lines*, and *beyond the lines*.

5. Assess metacognition by asking pupils to estimate how well they think they have answered each of the question types.

6. Invite a writing sample with a question that is more open-ended, but relevant to the selection and to the prior questions. Ideally, an

answer should be discussed and pondered before the pupil is asked to write.

7. Gather information over more than one sitting without concern that the assessment will be compromised. (Thinking, unlike simple recall, is not seriously diminished with time.)

8. Be innovative with scoring and passage selection, (e.g., use fables that lend themselves to assessing metaphoric thinking, and vignettes that represent areas of special interest and need such as reflecting different levels of syntactic complexity or containing many characters).

Further Implications

There appear to be several other potentialities in the use of the IR-TI formula that are worthy of attention and investigation. We are interested, for example, in discovering its value in assessing and instructing deaf children and second language learners. These are two groups whose cognitive strengths and weaknesses have tended to be difficult to ascertain with conventional instruments due to their limited English language proficiencies. The IR-TI's more open-ended questions and format allow for greater probing and accounting of pupils' thought processes while reading.

We are also interested in determining how effective the IR-TI may be as an instrument able to help teachers better internalize and use modern principles of evaluation such as *performance-based* assessment. Performance-based assessment is the name given to a current trend to place more emphasis on having assessment address higher-order functions, to become more a part of the instruction, and to better represent the more authentic and applied demands of living and learning.

In general, we believe that the IT-TI formula can serve as a wake-up call to reading and language arts teachers to be more attentive to the higher-order literacy needs of all children. We were especially encouraged in this regard by the comments of a teacher with a decidedly whole language orientation who said that the IR-TI helped to improve *kid-watching*, as Yetta Goodman (1990) refers to this decidedly intuitive capacity.

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Cultural Values as Depicted in Hispanic Contemporary Fiction Books Written for Children

Nelly Hecker, Bob W. Jerrolds

A growing emphasis on finding appropriate ways to define ourselves as a nation of many peoples has led to discussion and debate on the issue of how to include, in literary works, experiences and histories of different cultural and ethnic groups. The public demand for multicultural books may well be the result of a struggle to include the viewpoint of those groups considered outside the sociopolitical mainstream of the United States. Certainly any consideration of literacy for Hispanic children should include an examination of the depiction of Hispanic peoples and culture in contemporary fiction books written for children.

If the African-American experience with children's books may be used as a point of departure for this discussion, one can clearly see a well-defined change leading to the emergence of the culturally conscious literature that constitutes the body of African-American children's literature available today. Throughout early American history, African-Americans were depicted in children's literature in negative and disparaging ways and existed only in their relationship to Whites. Broderick (1973) made a careful study of African-American images in children's fiction from 1827 through 1967. She found that most of the characters fit one of seven stereotypes: the contented slave, the wretched freedman, the comic Negro, the brute Negro, the tragic mulatto, the local color Negro, and the exotic primitive. Other researchers since Broderick found similar portrayals of Blacks and Black culture in children's fiction (Harris, 1986).

In the period of the early 1990s middle class and college educated African-Americans such as A. Phillips Randolph, Alain Locke, Ida B. Wells, and W. E. B. DuBois argued for the creation in literature, including children's literature, of a new image for African-Americans (Huggins, 1976). Among the most influential voices calling for change in the depiction of African-Americans in materials written for children was that of W. E. B. DuBois.

DuBois (1919) issued a call for the development of a children's literature that would give African-American children an appropriate image of themselves. One of the most immediate results of DuBois' work was the development of *The Brownies' Book*, the first children's periodical written by African-Americans for African-American children. DuBois' thinking guided the development of the periodical and has influenced literature for African-Americans to the present day:

> Certainly *The Brownies' Book* was a forceful instrument for developing racial and political consciousness among Black children. The magazine gave Black children a code of behavior for their personal and public lives... It commanded and coaxed its readers to believe in themselves and their race through written materials. *The Brownies' Book* was one song of affirmation in the creation of a national culture that would burst forth periodically and reach a tumultuous crescendo in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. (Harris, 1986, p. 250)

Eloise Greenfield, Virginia Hamilton, Walter Dean Myers, and Mildred Taylor are but some of the accomplished authors who, starting in the mid-to-late- 60s and 70s and continuing in the 80s and 90s, have written excellent literature from the perspective of African-Americans.

The Issue of Cultural Authenticity

The diverse nature of the Hispanic population makes the writing of appropriate books a complex proposition. The 1990 United States census of population (Bureau of Census 1993a, 1993b) reported that Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Central and Latin Americans are part of the patchwork of Hispanic cultures in the United States. This population, however, is not a uniform group. Represented are different socioeconomic situations, different levels of competence in English and Spanish, and many political voices that reflect the personal interests of special groups.

It is estimated that at the beginning of the next century, due to continued immigration to the United States and high birthrates among some of these groups, Hispanics will constitute 15% of the total population; they will thus become the largest minority group (Bouvier & Davis, 1982). Adding to the issue of population growth, there is a yearning to preserve the language and cultural roots (Mendoza, 1994) and a demand for education that meets the needs and cultures of the different groups that make up the Hispanic family (Collins & Coltrane, 1991).

Despite contradictory findings from research as cited by Cummins (1979), bilingual programs were legislated in the 60s and 70s in an attempt to improve the educational achievement of children and maintain the culture and language of immigrant groups. Opponents of this legislation have, for years, questioned the effectiveness of the programs on grounds that they (a) defeat the purpose of language learning, the language being English; (b) diminish the economic potential of the immigrant groups; and (c) delay assimilation or integration to a common culture (Glazer, 1983, 1992). Proponents, on the other hand, have questioned the merit of dismissing the language and culture of the home for the sake of the language and culture of the dominant society. They have argued that the transition to reading in English would be easy to achieve for Spanish-speaking children if they have adequately developed first language skills (Cummins, 1979; Schon, Hopkins & Davis as cited in Schon, Hopkins & Vojir, 1984).

Whether children read about the Hispanic experience in Spanish and/or English, or they read as part of the curriculum in bilingual programs or in classrooms where teachers provide extensive collections of culturally diverse literature, the issue of what constitutes excellent literary form and presents true cultural images is at stake. As part of a discussion of multicultural literature and cultural authenticity, Bishop (1992) explains that in portraying what is unique to an individual culture and universal to all cultures, books of literary quality present without distortions or misrepresentations the nuances of day-to-day living in the culture they represent.

Nieto (1987) reports that, unfortunately, it is not unusual to find works that include stereotypes, distortions, misconceptions, misspellings, inappropriate use of language and/or the illusion of a generic Hispanic experience in children's books. In a recent review of Hispanic children's literature in the United States, Nieto (1992) expressed concern about the exclusion of the family and family traditions in books about Puerto Ricans written by non-Hispanics. Family and extended family relationships, she explained, were crucial to an understanding of the Puerto Rican experience. Nieto indicated, furthermore, that the family played a central role in other Hispanic groups and criticized the lack of authenticity in the representation of Hispanic life and culture.

The growing number of Hispanic literary works for adults is indicative of attempts to acknowledge and value the Hispanic experience and legacy in the United States. Books such as *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia (1992) promote understanding of cultural heritage and provide authentic interpretations of the Hispanic-American experience. These insiders' perspectives may be responsible for an increasing acceptance of Hispanic literature as a body of work (Tatum, 1982).

A number of writers and researchers (Mohr, 1987; Norton, 1993; Schon, 1990, 1992, 1995) have worked tirelessly to raise the level of cultural awareness of people who write, publish, and select books for children. Hispanic literature for children, however, remains under represented both in quantity and quality. Of approximately 5,000 children's books published each year in the United States, only 2% represent the Hispanic culture (Barrera, Liguori & Salas, 1992; Nieto, 1992). The small number of children's books that focus on Hispanic themes and characters in view of the growing numbers of Hispanics in the United States is disappointing.

Norton (1995) suggests that readers shape their view of the world and of themselves partially through the books they read. Through books they experience others; with books they see themselves. The voices of those who have carefully read and analyzed books that reflect Hispanic culture are alarming. They express concern about the quantity and quality of the books available; they point to a number of authenticity-related questions that educators need to continue to consider:

1. How is cultural thinking promoted in literature written for children?

2. In what way are Hispanic cultural values shown in the literature?

3. How is Hispanic life represented in contemporary children's books?

4. How are family and extended family relationships, crucial in the understanding of the Hispanic experience, described or implied?

5. Who has written excellent literature for children from the perspective of Hispanic-Americans?

6. Which are the books that include inaccuracies and distortions?

In order to respond to the issue of cultural authenticity, one needs to examine the culture, the value system, and the language of people who share experiences and wish to retain certain cultural traditions. The importance of family, for example, and the relationships and connections among family members and other individuals including extended family and close friends referred to as "como familia" (like family) is discussed extensively by authors who write about the cultural values shared by Hispanic groups (Nieto, 1992).

Ramirez and Castañeda (1974) identified four major value clusters associated with the Mexican-American experience: (a) strong family, community, and ethnic ties, meaning that the needs of the individual are secondary to those of family and ethnic group; (b) warm and open interpersonal relationships, resulting in cooperation rather than competition; (c) respect shown to older people with parents and other adults serving as children's models; and (d) emphasis on family ties which are reinforced through religious commitment, respect for adults, and social conventions.

Culturally Authentic Literature

Are the cultural values and traditions historically shared by Hispanics depicted responsibly and accurately in contemporary children's books? Sometimes.

Nicholasa Mohr is perhaps the most prolific and respected author of Puerto Rican books for children. She writes from personal experience about young people who feel overprotected by parents, lose a beloved grandparent, cannot understand the different rules that govern the behavior of boys and girls, and have meaningful relationships with the extended family. She addresses problems of poverty; she speaks with pride about cultural heritage. Her books include *El Bronx Remembered: A Novella and Stories* (1975) originally written with an adult audience in mind and *Felita* (1979), the story of an eight-year old who loves her family and friends in her Puerto Rican New York neighborhood but suffers discrimination and is attacked in another neighborhood. In *Felita*'s sequel, *Going Home* (1986), Felita is twelve years old. She visits relatives in Puerto Rico and faces discrimination. It is with the help of her great uncle and the community that she learns about people and life in Puerto Rico.

Cruz (1976), author of *Yagua Days*, writes about a Puerto Rican child born in New York. Adan thinks that rainy days are boring, but during a visit to Puerto Rico he discovers what children do there on rainy days. In the process, he learns to use a *yagua* to slide down the hill.

A number of books written for children are offensive to Hispanics and especially demeaning to Puerto Rican-Americans. In *Secret city,* *USA*, Holman (1990) shows young people living in an uncaring world. Although the characters' country of origin is not mentioned, there is text to indicate their Puerto Rican heritage, they come from the islands, live in New York, have Spanish names. The older boys play cards, smoke, deal in drugs; there is no Hispanic adult available to serve as a role model. The social worker, a white woman, "is nice."

In *Somewhere Green* by Mango (1987), a Puerto Rican character, Angel Rivera, is the protagonist's friend. In the text, the writer uses expressions that are not in keeping with the everyday language of New York Puerto Rican youth. In addition, Angel's mother screams his name, her voice is described as "a shrill", and females can only be relegated to traditional jobs, never could become, for example, architects.

In contrast, in *Scorpions*, a story that takes place in Harlem and is not about the Puerto Rican experience, Myers (1988) shows understanding of Puerto Rican family relationships as Tito clarifies for his friend Jamal the role of the grandmother in the family. Tito explains that "your grandmother is supposed to take care of you . . . in Puerto Rico everybody treats their grandparents like they were the real mother in the house" (p. 33). Other non-Puerto Rican authors such as Johanna Hurwitz and Milton Meltzer have also written convincingly about the Puerto Rican experience.

Well known writer of adult books and poet Gary Soto has written extensively for children. His stories about growing up Chicano in California present conflicts and concerns that have universal appeal. His characters relate to siblings, parents, grandparents and other respected adults such as coaches and neighbors who provide guidance and company. His books include *Baseball in April and Other Stories* (1990), a collection of short stories; *Pacific Crossing* (1992), a story in which two friends from the barrio participate in an exchange program in Japan; *The Skirt* (1992b) in which a young girl leaves her "folklorico" skirt in the school bus and is afraid to tell her mother; and *Taking Sides* (1991), a novel about a Chicano student who has to deal with a racist basketball coach and has conflicting loyalties when his new school team plays against the team from the old barrio school.

Several Mexican-American books show parent-child relationships that are tender and warm and situations in which the family provides support and is interested in the children's progress. Such is the case of *Hello, Amigos!* (Brown, 1986), *Hector Lives in the United States Now: The Story of a Mexican-American Child* (Hewett, 1990), and *I Speak English for my Mom* (Stanek, 1989). One of the realities of the Mexican-American experience, the struggle to enter the United States, is seen in *The*

Maldonado Miracle (Taylor, 1973), a story of danger and sometimes humorous adventure in which 12 year-old Julio who lives in Mexico is smuggled into the United States.

Lack of cultural insight is cited most often as the reason for errors, biases, and, in general, the portrayal of stereotypes and negative images of Hispanic-Americans in books written for children. The task of making informed selections of culturally authentic literature is not easy if educators lack understanding of the value systems and traditions that are important in Hispanic communities (Ramirez & Castañeda, 1974). The small number of books available in the market and the fact that they tend to go out of print soon after publication (Norton, 1995), further complicate the issue.

Conclusions

The lesson learned from the African-American experience with children's literature is that negative stereotypes can be identified and changed but it takes a sustained, determined, and long term effort to do so. The public demand for authentic African-American literature resulted in the sharing of a body of work that now includes many outstanding stories. As teachers read these stories and learn about the African-American experience, they also learn to chose appropriate literature for their classrooms.

Likewise, stereotypes and negative images in Hispanic children's literature need to be identified more clearly. Hispanic-American novelists need to be encouraged to share their authentic cultural values and traditions, and teachers need to read extensively in order to learn from these insiders' perspectives. As teachers become sensitive to issues associated with the Hispanic experience, they will be able to select literature that is rich in content and language, literature that defines the culture and the individuals realistically and with accuracy.

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Not Newbery But National Issues for Developing Higher Level Literacy

Louise M. Tomlinson

The literature on literacy instruction and current themes for conference programs in academic communities abound with topics and discussion supporting the need for instruction that enhances critical and analytical thinking. The literature also indicates that, perhaps where instruction does attempt to enhance critical and analytical thinking, it does not necessarily do so in a way which motivates and empowers students to put these skills to use in the real world in terms of citizen participation (Kozol, 1985). This shortcoming is indicated in Kozol's analysis of students difficulty in learning to read; a difficulty which he blames on the relationship between unequal distribution of wealth and power and the unequal distribution of literacy due to the injustice of our country's social order. Kozol calls for developing civic literacy among poor adults. This author believes that this initiative should be well taken for young learners in primary and secondary schools as well. Such an effort does not necessarily require any additional ESEA funds for public schools.

The purpose of the following discussion is to (a) stress the need for literacy education that engages the learner in critical and analytical thinking processes in response to reading; (b) emphasize the need for engaging the learner in a context of reading that relates real-world problems to real-world strategies for solutions; and (c) describe a format and materials for "deliberative politics" within which a group of learners can engage in and be empowered by reading, deliberation, and identifying common ground that meets both of these literacy needs. This discussion also suggests that the described format and materials present valuable opportunities to create a link between literary works such as books popularly chosen for appeal and relevance to young readers, like those on current listings, and expository material such as the National Issues Forums (NIF) issue books.

The instructional materials that are used in conjunction with this format can assist learners in developing critical and analytical thinking skills, developing vocabulary knowledge, and developing background knowledge in subject areas relevant to critical issues which invite citizen involvement in a deliberative process. The materials can also be used as a real-world link to literature-based reading instruction which aims to enhance critical and analytical skills.

Theoretical Perspective

The National Education Goals Report (NEGR) (1992) indicates that in 1988, although nearly all high school seniors had a basic knowledge of civics, "only about half understood specific government structures and functions, such as separation of powers, and only 6 percent had a detailed knowledge of institutions of government" (p. 31). The report goes on to state that, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, "in 1990 nearly eight out of ten tenth graders reported that they rarely or never performed community service" (p. 32). The NEGR also states that "voter registration and voting are much higher among older populations than among younger ones" (p. 34).

Although data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) has found that 43% of 13 year-olds and 49% of 17 year-olds use a newspaper as a daily source of information (Walberg & Tsai, 1983, 1984), difference in preference of items varies by world locations such that U. S. students favored comic strips, sports, and local news (Elliot & Steinbellner, 1979).

It should be noted that statistics indicate a substantial lack of development of critical and analytical thinking skills among American students. The results of performance in a national sample have led the NEGR (1992) to conclude that "while most young Americans have mastered the most basic functional literacy skills, few are able to perform more complex literacy tasks requiring them to process and synthesize many pieces of information (p. 42). In response to these findings, The National Education Goals for the year 2000, which are outlined in the NEGR, include two directives that are pertinent to the need for the enhancement of critical and analytical literacy skills that are relevant to real-world issues. Goal 3 includes a statement to the effect that "every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship"

(p. 321) and Goal 5 states that "every adult American will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 322).

According to Guthrie and Greaney (1991) the types, amounts and uses of reading differ for children and adults such that, while adults spend more time on brief document reading, then fiction and literature, with information on community and government last, children spend more time on skills improvement than book reading. They conclude that uses and functions or purposes for adult literacy involve "knowledge gain, participation in society, personal empowerment, and occupational effectiveness," while literacy for children involves "utilitarian, diversionary, and enjoyment" purposes (p. 89-90).

Both students and teachers have indicated the need for improving skills in thinking or reasoning critically in relation to tasks such as taking notes, planning projects, and writing, in the U. S. (Jacques & Corrin 1981) and in other countries as well (Roberts, 1981). There is also an indication that students are resistant to school-based reading. This problem is substantiated by Bintz (1993) who reports that students progressing from grades six through eleven resisted reading because of having little voice in the reading curricula and finding little personal relevance in the assigned readings.

The need for literacy education that engages learners in critical thinking and analytical reading is also evident in student perspectives when they have completed high school and arrive at institutions of higher education. Too many entering freshmen from a cross-section of our national population demonstrate very little interest in or knowledge about current events or critical national issues. Apathy, in this respect, is very high.

Students demonstrate a lack of ability to see the relevance of civic issues to their personal lives or to the lives of members of their communities. For example, here are a few of the responses given by students in the conclusion section of their written reader-response for Newsweek article summaries. These were written in a college freshman reading course taught by this author:

- [on a wide array of issues] "I don't have any opinion because this doesn't affect me"

- [on the Haitian crisis, Oliver North's campaign for office, fire hazards in GM trucks] "It is important to people in that country, in the state of Virginia, or who own the vehicle" [respectively]

- "I don't think that the author of the article has any opinion [when, indeed, the language and tone indicates an author's opinion]

Beside the fact that the public is largely disenchanted with politics, many young learners, as well as college level students, have learned to be apathetic, because they haven't been included in political processes in meaningful ways at a problem solving level.

Students need to be involved in discussions about strategic facts and other information-related topics, which have sweeping ramifications for all citizens, by linking these topics to more localized or personal situations. Social studies instruction for middle schoolers often devotes much time to analyzing the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, and the Civil War. Far less time is devoted to current national issues. Social studies courses in the traditional curriculum are predominantly focused on history. Current events have become increasingly complex, and information is available more rapidly. Therefore, social studies teachers must cram to cover history, current events, and civics in the primary and secondary curriculum.

Efforts to make social studies more relevant to current day issues have been spearheaded by the National Council for Social Studies. They have recognized that developing students' ability to deliberate public policy issues is very important and have supported the use of the National Issues Forums' (NIF) process and materials in the classroom (Griffin, 1994). Additionally, efforts to enhance the kind of literacy necessary for meaningful citizen participation have been implemented by an organization called Active Citizenship Today (ACT). The mission of ACT is to "create effective and meaningful civic participation programs that are designed to develop in students a commitment to service and a sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of their community" (Power, 1994, p. 1). The ACT program has adopted the NIF process and materials in a service learning institute for teachers in their ongoing programs which include several school districts across the nation.

Let's Bridge Literature-Based Instruction and National Issues for Critical and Analytical Thinking

In the vast majority of primary and secondary school classrooms, selections are made from collections of literature that are considered the best that can be offered, such as those awarded distinction for being most distinguished picture books or literature for young readers. Interestingly, only one of the Caldecott Award books (distinguished picture books), *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (Steptoe, 1987), was among those selected for use by teachers in 14 primary and middle grade classrooms in an ongoing research project of mine for which I asked teachers to provide a list of the literature to be used for the academic year. None of the Caldecott books emerged as material used during audiotaped lessons for which there was material included that did not appear on curriculum lists. However, several of the Newbery Award books (distinguished literature) were among those selected for use in these classrooms (See Appendix A). Although many of the award winning books may hold opportunities that talented teachers can take advantage of for critical and analytical thinking, these books don't address directly the critical national issues that impact us in our current and daily lives.

Books like those recommended on the Young Adult Library Services list do explore real life situations of a contemporary nature. The Sunshine State Young Reader's Award list also includes many selections that explore real life contemporary situations, but these books don't address critical national issues directly, nor are they developed within a framework of critical and analytical discourse. These books, as well as several in the previously mentioned award categories, can be used to accompany materials that are critically and analytically structured with a focus on national issues.

Embracing the National Issues

In one of the academic assistance courses offered in my division, we have adopted the NIF materials and we use related short stories, poems, and magazine or news articles as pre-reading which becomes prior knowledge for tackling readings on national issues and preparing for deliberation.

The deliberative format advances current theory from three perspectives. First, it advances the movement toward the democratization of education. Second, it advances the movement toward social reconstructionist approaches to teaching. Third, it advances the collaborative learning approach.

In the first case, this deliberative format is grounded in principles of equitable participation and responsible participation. In the second case, the deliberative format facilitates the empowerment of participants who relate personal stories to the issue or topic of discussion and then do *choice work* to develop an informed perspective from which they can arrive at a *public voice* that can create a vehicle for problem-solving action. Last, but not least, the deliberative format fosters and enhances interactive skills such as listening, brainstorming, and engaging all voices and perspectives (even those that are absent)—acts that facilitate the team approach or collaborative learning.

This author suggests that, both within and beyond the boundaries of social studies instruction, this format can also be used effectively to create a critical missing link between literature-based instruction and civic literacy driven by critical and analytical thinking in primary and secondary grade classrooms.

The Format, Materials, and Process for Engagement

The learning experience is guided by a format or set of ground rules for deliberative participation. Trained moderators or teachers facilitate forum discussions which can be held in their classrooms or communities. The instructional material, issue books, are developed at the fifth grade, high school, and college level, and also in Spanish.

All issue books, on a variety of topics—three new topics per year—are constructed in the same format. They include the following components:

- An introduction to the topic;
- Three or four choices for addressing the issue or solving the problem—each containing the strategic facts available, which advocates *and* critics use to support and contradict each choice, and each presented in a non-partisan manner; and,
- A pre- and post-forum ballot to gauge the knowledge and shift in opinion of participants before and after reading and deliberating about choices for addressing the issue.

The issue book and forum discussion is organized such that learners engage in choice work and deliberation and the harvesting of shared ideas that create a more informed public voice on an issue. Learners experience a democratic way of addressing critical issues. Discussion is guided to consider the pros and cons, or advantages and disadvantages, of each of three or four alternative approaches to resolving an issue. The discussion is also guided to tap sensitivity to diverse values underlying each choice or alternative.

The forum process does not aim to create a consensus, but rather to include as many views or voices as possible (even those absent) so that learners experience a democratic process from which they can achieve an informed perspective and understand what the common ground is for any given issue.

Evaluating the Process: Before and Afterthoughts

Prior to reading and discussing the choices for dealing with an issue, learners respond to a pre-forum ballot. After deliberating or doing choice work through each of the choices outlined, learners fill in a post-forum ballot. A comparison of pre- and post-forum ballot responses indicate individuals' shifts in opinions on various aspects of the issue at hand. Some shifts inevitably occur as a result of the more informed perspective that learners achieve through democratic deliberation in response to a non-partisan presentation of information on the costs and consequences of each choice. Results of the comparison of freshman students' pre- and post-forum ballots in response to *The Environment at Risk* will be discussed to illustrate the benefit of balloting as a means of evaluating the outcomes of group deliberation and the impact of the process overall.

The *Environment at Risk* issue book was used in my freshman developmental reading course as a core element of the curriculum design. The analysis in the issue book focuses on consideration of ethics and values pertaining to choices for solving the environmental crises we face. The choices are (a) Planetary Housekeeping: Blueprint for a Sustainable Future; (b) Balancing Act: Costs and Benefits of a Cleaner Environment; and (c) Carrots and Sticks: Putting a Price on Pollution. The issue book was supplemented by readings from scientific articles, short stories and current event news clippings. For example, one of the current event news clippings addressed the statistics on the proximity of toxic waste dumps and landfills to low-income neighborhoods and the related health hazards. Another current events piece answered the question of how long trash from popular consumer items lasts and addressed the power of the purse in impacting changes in environmental protection.

Over a two week period, students were engaged in reading and responding to the supplemental materials in preparation to use the issue book. As an immediate prelude to the issue book, students responded to its pre-forum ballot allowing them and the instructor to determine the extent of their prior knowledge of the topic and helping them to develop sensitivity to the issue. They were then engaged in reading a systematically structured issue book, and deliberating and identifying common ground during the class forum. Finally, they responded to the post-forum ballot to determine how their perceptions or opinions on the three choices for dealing with the issue had changed.

Twenty-three freshmen, 13 males and 10 females, 18-19 years of age, constituted the sample. The outcomes were as follows. The post-forum ballots indicated a shift to a higher priority on the urgency of environmental issues as compared to other relatively important concerns in the society, such as fighting illegal drug use and establishing government-funded day care centers for low and middle-income families.

On the question of the importance of reducing smog and air pollution in larger cities, there was a shift such that students gave it a higher priority on the post-forum ballot than on the pre-forum ballot. There was also a more notable shift to a greater sense of urgency on the issue for the females than for the males, overall, but particularly on this specific question about air pollution.

On the question of whether government funding should be increased to spur the development of solar energy even if it would mean a tax increase of $50 per year, students shifted in greater favor of this proposition. On the question of whether there should be a sharp increase in spending for mass transit in urban areas in order to improve air quality, even if it would mean a tax increase of $50 per year, the comparison of pre- and post-ballot responses indicated a shift in favor of the proposition. Overall, a heightened sense of urgency and notable shift in favor of taking actions that might even cost more was indicated by comparisons of the multiple choice ballot responses.

This change in perspective was corroborated by the students' responses to the additional open-ended question used at the end of the post-forum ballot. The question was: "If there were just one message you could send to elected leaders on the topic of the environment, what would it be?" Student responses were as follows: "Do something soon;" "fix the ozone layer and stick to cleaning up the environment;" "work to save the environment;" "take immediate action now to protect the environment;" "need to use some of each of the three choices to preserve the environment;" "clean up the environment;" "take things gradually to improve the environment;" "pollution is killing us slowly;" "clean it up!"

Educational Importance: Infusing the Critical and Analytical

An important outcome of every forum discussion guided by the issue books is that learners have had practice in citizenship. They have participated in a public life process (in classrooms or community groups) and reflected public interest in a way other than the traditional way of listening to political candidates or community leadership platforms and then voting *yes* or *no*. Participants learned to develop their listening skills as well as their critical thinking skills in order to respond and contribute immediately to an issue that is made relevant.

This process and format for reading, deliberation, and identifying common ground is a valuable vehicle for meeting important literacy needs. It facilitates the universalization and democratization of education. It can be used as a foundation for eradicating higher level illiteracy, for providing continuing education on community and world issues, and for creating a learning climate or interactional process based on principles of equity in participation and problem solving. Last, but not least, the issue topics bring community and world problems of immediate relevance to the possibilities for curriculum design and instruction in a format that can serve to facilitate the young reader's transition from learning through literature in trade books to learning from expository texts.

The thought processes that learners are engaged in particularly through the systematic structure of the issue materials and forum process guide the progression of analysis called choice work. The process of deliberation that occurs during the structured analysis of choice work engages the facilitator (teacher) and forum participants (students) in an approach that suggests an alternative to the model for a continuum of discussion questions provided by Barton (1995). Barton's model for conducting effective classroom discussions includes elements of literal, text implicit, transfer, academic knowledge, and life knowledge questions that are text based and student based.

The analysis in choice work ("Policymakers" 1991) moves individuals from questions and answers about facts and possible consequences, to values, to judgments, to possible actions, along the lines of that which group members can agree on, that which they disagree on but can accept, and that which they disagree with and cannot accept. The ultimate achievement is the use of these parameters to determine what is common ground for everyone involved—what elements of a story or event or issue are viable to everyone. (For the Choice Work model see Figure 1)

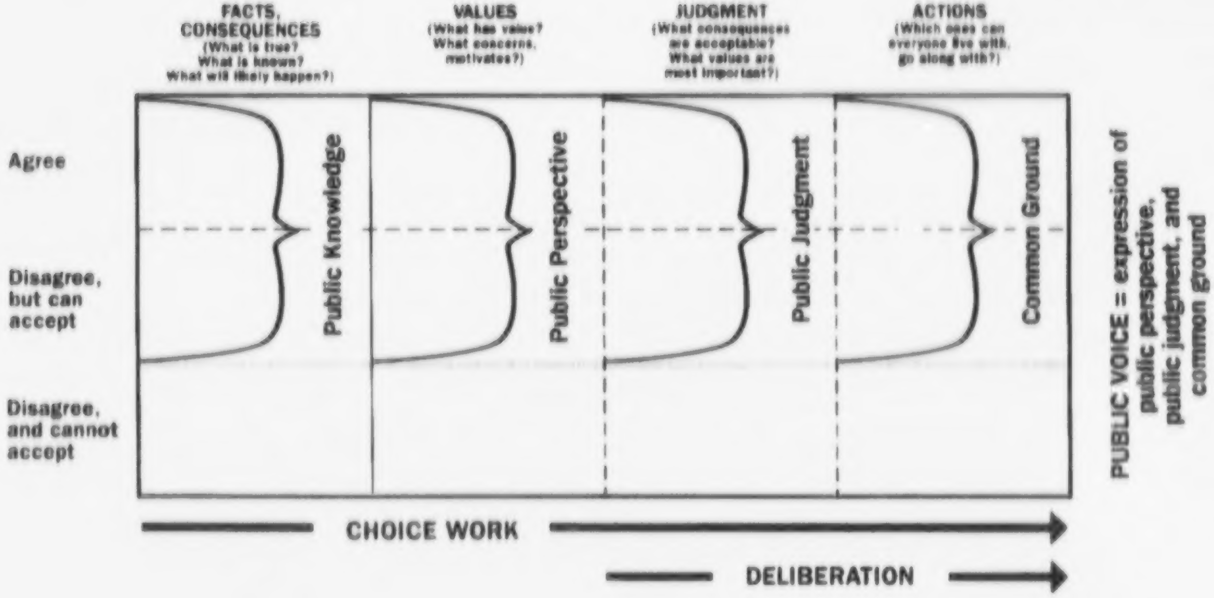
FACTS, CONSEQUENCES
(What is true? What is known? What will likely happen?)
VALUES
(What has value? What concerns, motivates?)
JUDGMENT
(What consequences are acceptable? What values are most important?)
ACTIONS
(Which ones can everyone live with, go along with?)
Agree
Disagree, but can accept
Disagree, and cannot accept
Public Knowledge
Public Perspective
Public Judgment
Common Ground
PUBLIC VOICE = expression of public perspective, public judgment, and common ground
CHOICE WORK
DELIBERATION

Figure 1. The choice work model

The Helping Link for Infusion

If this critical process is linked to the use of materials that are literature-based—those which do provide some elements that serve utilitarian, diversionary, and enjoyment purposes through circumstances that are personally relevant to young readers—then the motivation for developing critical and analytical thinking about current national issues and the ability to do so can be considerably enhanced. There are several NIF issue books whose topics are appropriate for orchestration with literary works that are popular and appealing selections. The list of paired issue books and popular literature titles which illustrate critical links that can be put into practice are presented here. (See Appendix D).

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Appendix A

Popular Newbery Books in Primary Classrooms

Award Year	Book Title	Author	Publisher
1986	*Sarah Plain and Tall*	MacLachlan	Harper
1978	*Bridge to Terabithia*	Paterson	Crowell
1977	*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*	Taylor	Dial
1972	*Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*	O'Brien	Atheneum
1970	*Sounder*	Armstrong	Harper
1944	*Johnny Tremain*	Forbes	Houghton Mifflin
1936	*Caddie Woodlawn*	Brink	MacMillan

Appendix B

Non-Fiction Recommended by the Young Adult Library Services Association (1992)*

Title	Author	Publisher
I Had a Hammer	Henry/Wheeler	Harper Collins
Last Chance to See	Adams/Carwardine	Crown
Illegal: Seeking the American Dream	Anastos	Rizzoli
Do or Die	Bing	Harper Collins
Beating the Odds: Stories of Unexpected Achievers	Bode	Watts
Predator!	Brooks	Farrar
Black Ice	Cary	Knopf
Children of Promise African-American Literature and Art for Young People	Sullivan	Abrams
North Pole Legacy: Black, White and Eskimo	Counter	University of Massachusetts
Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore White & Eskimo	Stewart Tabori/Chang	Workman
Memories of My Life in a Polish Village (1930-49)	Fluek	Knopf
The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane	Freedman	Holiday
Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder	Fussell	Poseidon
My Friend's Got This Problem, Mr. Candler	Glenn	Clarion

Appendix B *(continued)*

Title	Author	Publisher
Ghost Girl: The True Story of a Child Who Refused to Talk	Hayden	Little, Brown
The Girl With the White Flag: An Inspiring Tale of Love and Courage in War Time	Higa	Kodansha
There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America	Kotlowitz	Doubleday
What Do I Do Know? Talking About Teen Pregnancy	Kuklin	Putnam
Summer of Fire: Yellowstone, 1988	Lauber	Orchard
Sorrow's Kitchen: The Life And Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston	Lyle	Scribner
Walking With the Great Apes	Montgomery	Houghton
The Boy's War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War	Murphy	Clarion
Now Is Your Time! The African American Struggle for Freedom	Myers	Harper Collins
American Women: Their Lives in Their Words	Rappaport	Harper Collins
Maus: A Survivor's Tale II And Here My Troubles Began	Speiglmn	Pantheon
Ryan White: My Own Story	White/ Cunningham	Dial

**All copyrighted 1990-91.*

Appendix C

Sunshine State Young Reader's Award, Grades 6-8
Master List of Titles (1992-93)*
(Student's Favorites)

Title	Author	Publisher
Ghost Cadet	Alphin	Holt & Company
Our Sixth Grade Sugar Babies	Bunting	J. B. Lippincott
The Girl Who Invented Romance	Cooney	Bantam
Make Like a Tree and Leave	Danziger	Delacorte
Weasel	DeFelice	MacMillan
The Dead Man in Indian Creek	Hahn	Clarion
Dew Drop Dead	Howe	Atheneum
Reluctantly Alice	Naylor	Atheneum
Lyddie	Patterson	Dutton/Lodestar
Stiff Competition	Ragz	Minstrel
Nightmare	Roberts	Atheneum
Who Invited the Undertaker?	Ruckman	Crowell
Dogs Don't Tell Jokes	Sachar	Knopf
Brad's Box	Walker	Atheneum
The Christmas Spurs	Wallace	Holiday House

**All recently copyrighted — 1988-91.*

Appendix D

Suggested Titles for Linking Literature and NIF Issue Books

Nonfiction Titles *	**Issue Book Titles ****
Illegal: Seeking the American Dream	Admissions Decisions: Should Immigration Be Restricted?
Do or Die	Kids Who Commit Crimes: What Should Be Done About Criminal Violence?
Beating the Odds: Stories of Unexpected Achievers	Growing Up At Risk
Memories of My Life in a Polish Village (1930-49)	America's Role in the World
Ghost Girl: The True Story of a Child Who Refused to Talk	Growing Up At Risk
The Girl With the White Flag	America's Role in the World
There Are No Children Here	The Poverty Puzzle or Contested Values: Tug of War in the School Yard
Now Is Your Time! The African American Struggle for Freedom	Remedies for Racial Inequalities
Ryan White: My Own Story	Coping with AIDS

* *Nonfiction titles taken from the Young Adult Library Services Association list*

** *For complete list of issue book titles and publisher (by grade level) contact the Kettering Foundation at 1-800-433-7834.*

Linking Literature-Based Reading of Today with Literature-Based Instruction in the Past

Janet A. Miller

Many articles and advertisements in current professional publications relate to literature-based reading instruction. This may refer to using children's or young adult literature published as trade books in the classroom, or it may also refer to the use of textbooks which purport to be literature-based. Contemporary proponents of this approach emphasize the role of literature as a means of improving reading instruction and stress the value of books and reading in the lives of children and adults. Many believe that children can learn to read through less controlled vocabulary materials than those which have been used so widely for many years in the form of basal or graded readers, and that reading literature will help produce knowledgeable individuals who will continue to read throughout their adult lives and, as a result, be happier and more successful people.

Recent issues of the bimonthly newspaper of the International Reading Association, *Reading Today*, provide many examples of these points of view in advertisements, articles and features. For example, many educational publishing companies promote certain materials to help teachers use children's and young adult literature books in school instruction. One company offers 250 reproducible study guides for paperback novels that will help the teacher with pre-reading activities, vocabulary development, comprehension development, cross-curricular activities, writing activities and other types of activities in literature-based reading programs and whole language instruction ("Learning Links", 1994). Another company publishes teacher's guides to use with trade books which include vocabulary words, comprehension questions, and activities for over 300 titles ("Novel Units", 1994). In one issue of the newspaper, a full page advertisement for a cross curricular reading program declares it can help children make "real connections to real learning through real books" ("Theme Connections", 1995, p. 19). And another company claims that their computer-based management program will not only motivate students to read more and better books, but will improve reading scores ("The Accelerated Reader", 1994).

Articles and special features in *Reading Today* frequently discuss the importance of trade books in the development of literacy as well as the importance of being literate. For example, a resolution by the Indiana State Reading Association (1994) states that "access to books is a significant factor in developing proficient readers and in helping them to become lifelong readers" (p. 10). Other articles and announcements in the newspaper discuss using tradebooks to enhance family literacy and promote effective reading activities in the home (Baghban, 1995), promote Children's Book Week ("Celebrate Children's Book Week", 1994, p. 15) and announce the publication of a booklet called *Books Change Lives: Quotes to Treasure* (1994, p. 21). And one column discussed a variety of trade books used in making the teaching of history more exciting and meaningful (Wartenberg, 1995).

Professional journals of the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English include only a few advertisements, but they also reflect the current belief in utilizing literature for reading instruction. In addition, annual conferences of reading professional organizations typically feature a number of sessions devoted to using literature or real books to teach reading, to teach content area subjects, and to promote lifelong reading habits.

This is not the first time educators and others concerned about children and the schools have turned to literature in their search for more effective and appropriate reading instruction. Approximately 100 years ago literature played a role in changes that occurred in reading instruction. Although those changes appeared in various parts of the country at varying times, most occurred around the turn of the century. In Cincinnati, for example, they came about during school reforms in the 1890s and early 1900s. Based on annual reports and minutes of school board meetings, newspaper articles, and other sources, the story of reading in the Cincinnati schools emerged with changes in teaching practices and the goals of instruction that occurred in the late 19th and early 20th century documents. Educators believed in literature as a means of promoting literacy and developing educated moral citizens who could participate effectively in the multicultural urban community. (Note 1)

Reading Instruction Criticized

In the early 1890s, after visiting the classrooms of the public schools in Cincinnati as well as other major cities in the country, Joseph Mayer Rice published an article in *The Forum*, a national magazine devoted to civic and social issues, as well as a book on the public schools systems of the United States. The school teachers of Cincinnati, according to Rice (1893), had not yet "opened their doors to the new education" (p. 80) then appearing in other parts of the country. He complained about "concert recitations" which . . . "deaden the soul and convert human beings into automatons" (Rice, 1892, p. 305). In *The Forum* (1892) Rice described the reading instruction he saw while visiting the city's schools. In one classroom, he saw a "dozen pupils standing before a blackboard covered with lists of words, spelling the word 'Quail' at the top of their voices, and in melodious tones." After that, they read sentences such as "Is it a Quail?" first reading the sentence backwards and then forward (pp. 306-307). During reading and writing instruction, children copied words from the board, and then the teacher saw if they could read them. In one class, children took turns reading the same paragraph, and finally the whole class read the same paragraph orally.

Rice (1893) argued that this kind of poor instruction typically found in the Cincinnati schools was due to the "professional incompetency of the teachers" who needed to have "a professional education" (p. 90-91), as well as the inability of the superintendent to control the appointment of principals and teachers. Annual reports of the schools tend to confirm Rice's criticism as many of the superintendents of schools, who wrote the reports, also complained that reading instruction, which emphasized pronunciation of words and elocutionary drill, reflected the same mechanical and memoriter styles used for years in the schools (Miller, 1974). School superintendents decried the overuse of concert recitation and memoriter methods. Superintendent Emerson E. White admitted there was a problem with teaching methods but claimed that teachers found it difficult to "rise above mechanical and rote work" (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914, p. 29). He also complained that it took quite a long time to train teachers and that there may be some few teachers "who are not capable of much thinking" and would never be able to improve their instruction (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914, p. 29; pp. 42-43). Other than efforts to help such teachers through institutes and lectures, superintendents found they could do little about the teaching staff because of the control of appointments by the locally elected and politically sensitive school board (Miller, 1974).

Newspaper columns and published letters from citizens, as well as the annual reports, document continuing concern about the quality of teaching and the problem of dealing with children who were unable to keep up with the class work. Contributors to the local papers complained about poor readers and the failure of the school to produce well-educated and well-behaved students. Superintendent White and Superintendent William H. Morgan both remarked on the need for teachers to allow for different speeds of learning. They also noted the difficulty teachers faced when they had to deal with children from many different backgrounds and countries in large classes which ranged from 30 to 100 pupils (Miller, 1974).

Whatever the cause or contributing factors, reading instruction was frequently criticized in the late 19th century and ultimately became the focus of some of the changes in the curriculum which included the introduction of more literature into the curriculum.

The Public Schools in the 1870s

Cincinnati had established public education in the city in 1829 with the passage of a Common School law and the opening of two district schools. By 1870 the Common Schools of the city included 21 district schools with grades E or F (the lowest) through A (the highest), several branch schools for African-American students, two intermediate schools, two high schools, a normal school, an industrial school for abandoned or delinquent children, and four night schools. The Common Schools were controlled by a Board of Trustees and Visitors who were elected from each of the city's 20 political wards. Each elected trustee served not only on the central board but also as a local trustee for at least one of the district schools. The board hired a superintendent of schools and appointed principals and teachers upon recommendation of the various local trustees (Miller, 1974).

While this arrangement resulted in considerable local control, from the beginning the board sought to ensure uniformity in the city's schools. It mandated a course of study which was to be followed with little or no deviation by the teachers in all the district schools. Board rules stated that "grading, course of study and textbooks prescribed, shall be strictly adhered to, and no other studies, or textbooks shall be introduced, nor shall any other pupil be required to provide or be permitted to use any other books than those herein specified: (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914, p. 211). In addition, the board required that teachers cover certain amounts of material from the readers by specified times during the school year (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914). Teachers in the Common Schools were clearly to provide a common, uniform education for all who attended. To achieve this, the board controlled the curriculum, the adoption of all books, and the appointment of teachers, principals and the superintendent. These policies were in effect until the 1890s when the superintendent gained more power and the board adopted a more flexible position (Miller, 1974).

Reading Instruction

Reading was one of the subjects mandated and controlled by the Cincinnati Board of Education through the Course of Study, which was printed in the *Annual Reports*. Teachers were required to base their reading instruction entirely on the adopted textbooks. For example, instruction began with the *Knell-Jones Phonic Readers* (1868) in the lowest grade where teachers were expected to develop a basic foundation into the "philosophy" of the English language (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914). This meant that teachers were to help students learn the "sounds and powers" of the letters (Knell & Jones, 1868, p. v). When the phonic reader was finished, supposedly by mid-year, teachers and students moved on to the *McGuffey's First Reader* (1868-1877, 1877-1890). Teachers were required to use the McGuffey Readers in subsequent grades to continue to teach the alphabet and sounds through the use of extensive word lists and carefully graded reading selections (Miller, 1974). According to the superintendent of schools in the early 1870s, children were first given the word, then the elementary sounds, followed by the names of the letters representing the sounds (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914). This was a mixture of the phonetic-alphabetic and word method (Smith, 1965; Mathews, 1966).

Teachers in Cincinnati throughout the 1870s and 1880s used traditional, highly formalized practice exercises with much oral drill. Instruction was carried out in mass concert recitation which resulted in "loud, harsh sing-song" exercises (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914, pp. 61-62; 64-65). John Hancock, the school superintendent in 1870, reported that this kind of instruction which he called "lifeless plodding routine" was frequently found in classrooms, especially in the large cities with graded schools (Miller, 1974).

According to the Annual Reports of the Common Schools from 1870 to 1890 the goal of reading instruction was to develop readers who could read accurately with expression and understanding so that they could give a logical analysis of the material. There was an emphasis on oral reading and, as stated in one version of the course of study, instruction aimed at securing a "mastery of the words, a clear grasp of the thought, and a proper vocal expression of the thought and feeling" (Cincinnati Board of Education, p. 156).

In addition to these skill goals, an analysis of the contents of a number of textbooks used in schools in the United States during the late 19th century, as well as the stated concerns of Cincinnati's school trustees and superintendents, suggests that reading instruction in Cincinnati as in other parts of the country was also to help children learn moral and ethical lessons, gain knowledge about an American heritage and develop patriotic attitudes (Beach, 1992; Miller, 1974). In other words reading was a means of cultivating a common culture. Between 1870 and 1890 the Cincinnati schools had a series of superintendents as a result of never-ending political debates and campaigns. Each new city administration, newly elected Board of Trustees and Visitors, and new superintendent brought particular ideas about the schools, curriculum, and instruction. In addition, local residents voiced concern about the schools from time to time through the city's newspapers (Miller, 1974).

Changes in Schools and Instruction

During these same years, the city of Cincinnati was undergoing a significant transformation related to urbanization, industrialization and immigration. Changes in the form and structure of the city were matched by changes in the social, economic and political life of the people. Urban growth created problems of transportation, lighting, safety, health, government, and personal adjustment. This growth and the increasing diversity of the population led to intense efforts to tighten the political and social control. It altered traditional patterns of family and community life and fostered demands for new or significantly altered institutions to promote social welfare and solve social problems (Miller, 1968). Changes in the type and quality of education, including reading instruction, became a part of reform efforts which swept the city (Miller, 1974).

Some of the changes in the school began early. In the mid-1870s, partly as a response to fears about the lack of uniform moral training in the schools after the elimination of Bible reading in 1870, the Course of Study was changed to include some literary materials. The edition of McGuffey Readers being used in the schools at the time included religious, moralistic, and patriotic material designed to instill Anglo-European values had very little authentic literature. After some discussion, the school board adopted a volume of graded literary selections called "Memory Gems," which had been developed by school superintendent John B. Peaslee (1881) to combat something he labeled "fundamentally wrong or deplorably weak" in the "present order" (p. 154). These gems, which were used as part of daily morning exercises for moral instruction, included works from Longfellow, Poe, Whittier, Holmes and Lowell as well as other American writers (Miller, 1974, Peaslee, 1881).

In 1880, the McGuffey Readers came under direct attack when a group of teachers and principals expressed dissatisfaction with the texts. The school board reviewed materials from several other textbook companies, but voted only to change to a newer edition of the McGuffey Readers because they had "well executed and attractive illustrations". Further the board believed the selections in the newer readers would "have a powerful influence in creating a pure esthetic and literary taste among those who daily read and study them" (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1878-1914).

Efforts to provide more literature for students and develop literary tastes were related to concerns of teachers, librarians, superintendents, and others in the community about what students read on their own. Local newspapers noted that educators joined the debate which was going on elsewhere in the country about the effects of reading "trashy" books or meaningless texts (Beach, 1992; Miller, 1974). They feared that reading "low literature" encouraged criminality. Believing that good reading material would counteract the effects of what they considered "vile literature," they sought to find ways to encourage boys and girls to read good literature, not necessarily only for enjoyment, but as a way of instilling morals. Teachers declared war on "dime novels" that were available to young people, which teachers often found "hidden in text books, protruding from pockets, and concealed in desks," (*Cincinnati Commercial*, cited in Miller, 1974).

Superintendent Peaslee supported this fight against dime novels and argued literature could combat something among the people at the time that was "fundamentally wrong or deplorably weak" (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914, p. 154). It could, he wrote, have an elevating influence, especially if it was used early in the common schools where there was a "large and needy class of pupils" (p. 163). In addition to the value of literature in training the mind and storing it "with grand and ennobling thoughts" (p. 158), it could "relieve the monotony of school," give pupils a love of school, and secure more regular and larger attendance (p. 164).

In 1882, Peaslee met with teachers and librarians to discuss ways they might combat the influence of low literature and provide children with supervision in their selection of reading materials. Participants eagerly endorsed the idea of close cooperation between the librarians and teachers and explored possibilities of developing approved reading lists and providing libraries in each of the schools (Miller, 1974).

Throughout the 1880s individuals in the community raised issues about the schools and reading as they sought to clarify the role of the schools in this period of social upheaval and transformation in Cincinnati. Many people looked to the Common Schools, as agents of the states and communities, to contribute to the solution of the social and civic problems prevalent in the community at the time. Reformers and community leaders, faced with disorder in the cities along with riots, strikes, and a series of economic depressions, believed schools would help resolve some of the problems by uplifting the poor and homogenizing the increasingly diverse population through the teaching of traditional values. Just as early 19th century reformers thought the common schools should provide a moral and political education to combat the social turmoil of the 1830s, the 1840s and the 1850s "generated by universal male suffrage, Jacksonian democracy, and a restive population of urban laborers" (Nasaw, 1979, p. 40), many late 19th century educators and reformers believed the schools could help provide social order by fitting the individual to new urban and industrial needs (Lazerson, 1971). Some, however, began to suspect that uniformity and the same education for all was not the appropriate means of achieving the goal of a unified, moral, and literate society.

Literature and New Modes of Instruction

Although most efforts to reform teaching methods in Cincinnati had been relatively unsatisfactory up to the 1890s, the situation began to change by the end of the decade. In 1898, at the request of many teachers, the school board dropped the McGuffey readers and adopted the Baldwin readers. According to the committee recommending the change, the old McGuffey series was "not equal to the demands of the day" (Cincinnati Board of Education, p. 19-20). The Baldwin Readers, they thought, were more appropriate. James Baldwin (1897), the writer and publishers of the Baldwin readers, claimed that he tried to make reading a source of pleasure because he believed that "only those children who like to read ever become good readers" (p. ii). His books were designed to provide "varied succession of thoughts and images" that would arouse curiosity, direct imagination, and add to the store of knowledge. All the lessons were arranged to lead readers to "a knowledge and appreciation of the best things in the permanent literature of the world" (Baldwin, 1897, pp. ii).

The new readers were different from the McGuffey Readers in several respects. They included more suggestions to teachers for language work and numerous illustrations to help children enjoy reading and understand the stories. This would help the teachers deal with the challenge of teaching children with a variety of native languages and diverse cultures. At each grade level, the books had a mixture of stories drawn from American and British traditional literature and some of the texts included stories about the history of the United States. They also included "instructive stories that will appeal to the child's better nature and strengthen his love of right doing" (Baldwin, 1897, Second Reader, p. 3).

A different reading series was not the only change in teaching materials. During the 1890s the Teachers' Association advocated more time for supplementary reading, using materials other than those included in the basic reader, and increasing the number of schools with libraries (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1870-1914; 1878-1914). While some teachers in the 1880s had become aware of the growing interest among educators elsewhere in the country in utilizing more supplementary materials in teaching, it would have been impossible to implement this in Cincinnati prior to the late 1890s because of school board rules. By 1897 the rules had changed and teachers were able to use a greater variety of materials in their classrooms and did not have to limit their selection to those from an approved list. The school superintendent proudly claimed that there were libraries "adopted to the class of children in attendance" at every one of the public schools (*Commercial Tribune*, cited in Miller, 1974).

Supplemental reading and school libraries were possible by the end of the 19th century because the school board no longer sought to impose the strict uniformity it had demanded for years. School officials realized that schools had to more effectively meet the challenge of teaching reading and other branches of study to a heterogeneous population. In addition, revisions in state laws had by that time altered the role of superintendents, giving the office more authority over curriculum and personnel. These changes resulted in greater flexibility in the curriculum and enabled the schools to better adjust to the diversity among the school population and their families (Miller, 1974).

No one was more interested in providing flexibility and meeting the challenge of diversity than Richard G. Boone who was appointed superintendent of the schools in 1899. As an outsider, with an educational background from Johns Hopkins, De Pauw University, Ohio University, and Indiana University, he brought a new perspective to the city. Boone encouraged teachers to attend professional meetings and arranged visits of teachers and principals to other cities known for the innovative programs so they could learn what fellow professionals were doing. He arranged for speakers from other parts of the country to participate in local meetings and institutes (Miller, 1974). G. Stanley

Hall, a leader of the child study movement at Clark University and a personal friend of Boone, gave a lecture in 1901, after which Boone encouraged his teachers and principals to "inculcate the spirit of Dr. Hall's ideas into their teaching as far as practicable" (*Cincinnati Tribune*, cited in Miller, 1974). Hall was a proponent of the word method in teaching reading and stressed the importance of reading as a "means of gratifying an interest" (Hall, 1991, pp. 417-418). But more importantly perhaps, Hall stressed the importance of recognizing the particular background and needs of each individual child who attended school (Cremin, 1961). This was an important concept for teachers who taught children in the public schools at the turn of the century.

Many of the reforms promoted by Boone affected reading and the role of literature. He encouraged joint efforts of parents and teachers in organizing monthly meetings which dealt with book reading and other topics related to the schools and children. These Mother's Meetings and Parents Associations were, in his opinion, a "most hopeful sign of advancement." At the meetings principals, teachers, and parents discussed "the importance of an elementary schooling, habits of industry and punctuality, care of the person and clothing and books, the reading habit, behavior on the street, the use of tobacco," and a variety of other topics devoted to appropriate and healthful behavior in the city (Cincinnati Board of Education, p. 67).

Superintendent Boone promoted changes in reading instruction which reflected his belief in the value of literature. He stressed the role of supplemental reading and the need for classroom library collections rather than school libraries. Boone wanted reading instruction to help students become intelligent users of books as a result of comparative study of authorities and books of information, as well as reading folklore and other traditional literature. He recommended placing collections of reference books and other readers in each classroom as well as two or more sets of readers in addition to the adopted text, simple history readers, books of travel, and nature stories (Miller, 1974):

The Cincinnati School Board supported supplementary reading, furnishing schools with sets of 25 copies of books particularly identified as supplementary reading materials. In addition, in 1905, the board announced that 57 branch libraries would be established in the public schools with certain teachers acting as librarians. The initial collection of books were selected on the basis of a list of approximately 50 books for each grade that had been created by principals and teachers. Children were encouraged to use the public library as well as their own school libraries (Cincinnati Board of Education, 1878-1914).

By the turn of the century educators in the Cincinnati schools were using greater amounts of real literature as they tried to develop readers with a desire to read and an ability to use reading as an effective tool in their personal and civic lives. Control continued to be a major issue in the school system, but the emergence of better trained teachers and greater authority of the school superintendent helped open up the curriculum to different materials and methods to meet the needs of diverse students who came into the urban schools in ever increasing numbers. In addition to reform efforts in the schools and alterations in the role of the superintendent of schools, concerns about social influences on growing numbers of children living in the urban environment resulted in the acceptance of new materials for teaching reading along with more flexibility in the school curriculum. Educators and citizens, worried about the negative influences of the city's streets, raised demands for literature which would, they hoped, provide a positive influence on the character development of all children in the schools.

Conclusion

While it would be difficult to prove any direct link between the past and the present in the use of literature, nevertheless certain aspects of turn of the century developments are apparent in current practices and beliefs about reading. Then, as now, literature is incorporated into basal readers or introduced through trade books, and there is variety in the types of materials that teachers use to teach reading. Educators, both in the past and today, recognize the need of trying to meet varying interests and abilities of students by providing them with a variety of literary experiences. And, they stress the role of literature in developing the habit of reading as a life-long activity. Perhaps the one aspect of literature-based reading instruction in the past, which differs somewhat from the present, is the promotion of literature as a way of accommodating diversity in the schools and communities in order to build a common culture among the diverse people in the late 19th century communities.

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Footnote

1. Literature in this article refers to texts which are written for young children and adults as a source of personal experience, emotion, and knowledge. Typically fiction deals with habits, customs, manners and morals of various kinds and classes of people at various times. While it may be found in school basal readers, it is most frequently published as trade books and is not written for the sole purpose of instruction but for entertainment and information.

A Participant-Observer's Notes Regarding a Problems Court Session at the American Reading Forum, 1994

Wayne Otto, David Gustafson, Ken Smith, Bernie Hayes, Roger Eldridge, Jr.

Wayne Otto's Introduction

It was Tony Manzo, as I recall, who insisted, way back in the days when the American Reading Forum was just a glimmer in its charter members' eyes, that if we were going to start a *forum* we ought to provide a proper format for addressing *problems* of significance to reading educators. Tony's dream, I think, was not merely to invite debate but to come to some sensible resolution of unresolved problems whenever possible. After all, Tony might have said, what's a forum for?

And so in the fullness of time, Problems Court sessions were invited for the first ARF meeting, and over the years they have become part of the ARF tradition. Each year there is a call for Problems Court sessions, and each year several Problems Court sessions appear on the program. Judging from the Problems Court proceedings that have been published in the annual yearbooks, though, I'm not sure just what function they serve. Clearly, they do not generally lead to the resolution of debatable questions. They tend instead to be sessions where people get to say what they think about one or more issues that have relevance for reading educators. The presenters and the participants share some stories . . . but there's no press for closure.

Which is okay with me. I think shared stories turn out to be our personal realities. Whether we like it or not, we are our stories.

Sometimes I wonder, though, what other ARF members think about when they think about Problems Court sessions—what they *should* be . . . what they*are*. But first, I guess, I ought to say what I think about when I think about a Problems Court session.

So this is how it went in 1994 . . .

First, there had to be idea for a Problems Court proposal. That was easy because about the time I got the call for proposals I was thinking about an article that made me want to talk.

A Problems Court Proposal

So I sent this proposal to Cindy:

Session Title: *Scientific Evidence: You Show Me Yours and I'll Show You Mine*

About the time that members of the American Reading Forum gathered for their 1993 meeting, Keith Stanovich's essay "Romance and Reality" appeared in the December '93/January '94 issue of *The Reading Teacher*. In the essay, Stanovich claims that almost everyone *likes* some of his research, but not everyone likes some other research he's done. He says "Research topics that I investigated that were closer to the heart of the Great Debate over reading education were more controversial" (p. 284). He goes on, then, to argue that reading educators must let scientific evidence answer questions about the reading process.

In the year that will have passed before the American Reading Forum meets again in 1994, one assumes—one hopes—that Stanovich's essay will have provoked erudite discussions, scholarly debates, vitriolic attacks, starry-eyed endorsements, and—one trusts—a few knock-down-drag-out brawls in public places. Aside from the issues raised by Stanovich's research, the personal views that Stanovich expresses regarding the role of objective science in directing the practices of reading educators are certain to evoke strong reactions, both positive and negative.

The proposal here, then, is to take another, hopefully more dispassionate look at the Stanovich essay. After a year of observation, discussion and contemplation the presenters and the audience-participants will have—hopefully—had time and the inclination to develop a personal perspective on the issues and be in the mood for constructive discussion. We believe that the Problems Court format provides a proper stage for such a discussion. The presenters will lead off with personal reactions to what they perceive as a critical issue or two in the Stanovich essay. That should provide substance for a worthwhile discussion.

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Of course I'd asked a few esteemed colleagues to be presenters just to get the discussion going:

David Gustafson - University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Kenneth M. Smith - Eastern Oregon State College

Roger Eldridge - University of Northern Colorado

Bernie Hayes - Utah State University

And I'd put myself down as the reactor as well as chair for the session, which, in retrospect, may not have been such a great idea. Too limiting, no place for a new voice.

The Problems Court Session

Quite a few people showed up at the session, considering the lateness of the hour and the brightness of the day—20 or so. Everyone had read the Stanovich article! I summed up the proposal to set the focus for the session; then the four presenters shared some of their thoughts about Stanovich's article and, particularly, about his claims regarding the role and value of *objective science* in education—reading education. Finally, the audience jointed in the discussion and we all shared a few stories.

The only decision we made was to adjourn after an hour or so. But I thought that for the most part the participants more or less agreed that maybe Stanovich is a little heavy on the *objective science* side of the ledger.

When we got back to the condo, my esteemed colleagues, the presenters, promised to send me their thoughts, written down, on the topic and the discussion.

So here are the written down thoughts of the participant-presenters in the Problems Court Session (followed by some reactions by me).

Gus's "Commentary on 'Romance and Reality'"

Upon receiving Dr. Stanovich's article in the December 1993/January 1994 issues of *The Reading Teacher*, I immediately shared it with my graduate class. Interestingly, they had what one could only describe as an indifferent reaction to it. The most prized section was a box on the fourth page which was labeled "Examples of phonological awareness tasks." This might have been expected since the students were enrolled in a graduate-level Remedial Reading class and looking for practical ideas to implement in their classes. Since it was the end of the semester with many loose ends to tie up, the students were encouraged to take it home and read it at leisure. Once put aside, it wasn't until Wayne Otto suggested that a discussion session be organized on it for ARF that I revisited it with a more critical eye; and when it was known that we would be commenting on this article, I set about obtaining copies of the three works by Stanovich that were included in his bibliography so that I could become more familiar with his research. Later I read a critical commentary by Denny Taylor (1994) of one of her studies which also was covered in one or two of Stanovich's other bibliographic entries.

Stanovich began his article by dividing his research into two categories: that which almost every likes and that which not everyone likes. That which almost everyone *likes* included two studies. One shows ". . . that children who have aptitude/achievement discrepancies in reading have cognitive profiles that are surprisingly similar to children who do not. Also to a large extent, these groups respond similarly to various intervention" (p. 180). The other *liked* study concerned the efficacy of print exposure to verbal and cognitive growth which he gave the name "The Matthew Effect". The *not liked* (by some) studies involved (a) the role of context as a word recognition aid; (b) word callers; and (c) the role of phonological skills in early acquisition.

Stanovich argues that the studies *not liked* were probably not liked because they are too close to the *Great Debate* of *Whole Word* vs. *Phonics*, which he labels "Whole Language" vs. "Phonics". He states: "Simply put, the work on phonological awareness and context effects contradicted the philosophical tenets of the more 'hard line' whole language advocates" (p. 284). He goes on to cite Mosenthal's (1989) characterization of Whole Language as a romantic approach to literacy and says that in the end, a dose of reality in the early stages might preserve the marriage. That dose is *science*. "Nothing has retarded the cumulative growth of knowledge in the psychology of reading more than the failure to deal with problems in a scientific manner" (Stanovich, 1984, p. 187).

While we will always have romantics among us (I hope!), it seems to me that the education profession is comprised mainly of artists who share romance and reality, both students and teachers, who question the all-knowing power of science over them. How good is it really? Where does personal experience come in when we evaluate science? How strong is the evidence and under what circumstances was it derived? Is there cause for skepticism when Stanovich, et al., (1984) depend on 31 kindergartners to show that his seven phonological awareness tasks are a better predictor of reading achievement than the *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test* (1979) and equal to the *Metropolitan Reading Survey Test* (Nauss & McGauvran, 1976) when both of the latter two tests are suspect in terms of validity? Are 31 students enough for those of little faith?

Stanovich's argument for the acceptance of science would seem to have suffered a setback with publication of the West, Stanovich, and Mitchell (1993) study and the forceful attack on it by Denny Taylor (1994), both in the *Reading Research Quarterly*. If you like a good heavyweight prize fight this one is a real treat!

In their paper titled "Reading in the Real World and Its Correlates," West, et al., (1993) described their study in these terms: "Here we examine the properties of checklist-with-foils indicators of print exposure by investigating whether they are associated with individual differences in actual reading behavior observed in a non-laboratory setting. The setting chosen was an airport passenger waiting lounge" (p. 37). They then go on to describe a reader as one who is reading for recreation for at least ten minutes. If one read for business or anything else, one was not a reader (though they never explained why). (I wonder how they would have classified Wayne Otto? When that guy reads, is it for business or pleasure? Does he know? Do I care?) If one read for less than ten minutes, one was not a reader and so on. Once they had identified their readers, they had them fill out checklists of authors, television programs, television names, films newspapers, magazines, and 30 target names from Hirsch's (1987) Cultural Literacy List. Each list had foils to keep the readers from cheating. They also included 106 nonreaders along with their 217 readers.

In their results section, they wrote: "Our primary concern was whether individuals classified as readers or nonreaders via a 10-minute sample of behavior in the airport would also be differentiated on the recognition checklist measures of print exposure. This was clearly the case" (p. 40). Where such a finding leaves us just boggles my mind! Taylor (1994) put her skepticism concerning science clearly in focus with her concluding commentary on the Stanovich, et al., study:

> There is nothing benign about the study "Reading in the Real World" nor about much of the so-called empirical research that has been generated over the years by the reading field. "The

> reading process" has been distorted, skewed, and then reified, as if it exists and can be captured with what West, Stanovich and Mitchell describe as "a handy tool for investigating the cognitive consequences of literacy" (p. 47). What a trivial pursuit. Pursue it if you must, but please, don't call it reading in the real world. (p. 287)

Keith Stanovich doesn't have to worry about being unaccepted by a few dyed-in-the-wool whole language types because there are always people out there who will give proper homage. Why, just as I am writing this, I have received in the mail an advertisement announcing an exciting new reading intervention program that integrates whole language and phonic activities! It goes on to say that there are 34 lessons, starting with one-syllable words and increasing in difficulty.

> Each lesson teaches basic phonic elements combined with scores of word lists, letter-sound-key, word/picture cards, supplementary writing activities, and cloze exercises that allow your students to apply their newly learned skills to popular, widely available children's book.
>
> You'll also find detailed lists of over 650 children's books arranged by level of difficulty and organized into thematic units, plus many motivation and extension activities. And to make your job easier, there's a lesson plan that can be used for each unit, plus a procedures section describing the program's parts. (NY: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1995)

As is evident above, great new materials will meet the challenge of the different philosophies so that all can be happy. In the meantime, would all of those, who *do not* believe that some children need systematic direct instruction in the alphabet principle, phonological analysis, and alphabetic coding, please step to one side. Keep on stepping!

Spot! Spot! Where are you Spot? Puff?

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Otto Interjects

As usual, I'm not sure what Gus really means to say. But he seems to be saying that (a) Stanovich seems to have gotten more than a little bit carried away with personal applications of the scientific method—particularly in implementing and interpreting his study of airport readers; (b) nevertheless, he (Gus) continues to believe—like Stanovich, but presumably for different (but not stated) reasons—that phonemic awareness has an important part to play in learning to read.

So far, so good. I'm inclined to think, too, that when reading researchers tighten up their methodology enough to be doing "good science" they usually abandon common sense, as Denny Taylor so eloquently argues. And I'm always astonished, too, when anyone even seems to suggest that there could be reading without phonemic awareness.

I can't even guess, though, what Gus means to say about the "exciting new reading intervention program." Does he really mean to say that great new programs will make everybody happy by striking happy compromises? Or is he pooh-poohing the whole idea of compromise, suggesting that what appears to be compromise between seemingly contrasting approaches leads only to an illusion of happiness. Beats me!

Personally, I think that every whole language *purists* can embrace the notion of phonemic awareness; it's "phonics" in its most arbitrary manifestations that they hate. So do I. And I don't think there can (or should) be a compromise.

Maybe that's what Gus is getting at . . . Or not.

Ken's "So What Do We Know for Sure? Some Thoughts Prompted by Stanovich"

While reading through Stanovich's (1993/1994) "Romance and Reality" article, I was reminded of a meeting with colleagues some time ago. We were beginning to conceptualize and develop a new instructional program and needed to review the current and relevant professional literature. "So what do we know for sure?" someone asked. Our need for "scientific evidence" was acknowledged. In short, after considerable review, we found some relevant and useful data for addressing our general issue, but discovered very little useful research which explored the specific questions on which we were focusing. There were some published groups or individuals who had reputations as "the authority" in certain focused areas of research, but the specific research questions which they had examined were so narrow in scope that, while providing a small bit of scientifically supported evidence, the data added little insight into the broader issue we were exploring. The rest of the relevant and available professional information we found consisted of the evolving speculative philosophical frameworks or conceptual bases being developed and reified by that authority. While it is obvious that quality research, either qualitative or quantitative by design, must focus on small manageable bits, we found that trying to rely on scientific evidence to answer our current professional dilemmas and meet our working demands was troubling if not frustrating.

While reading, a memory and some questions came to mind. Over twenty years ago, I spent many hours examining every relevant journal published to find the evolving research related to reading for *The Journal of Educational Research* (Otto & Smith, 1974; Smith & Otto, 1973). Through the years, we have carefully followed this evolving research summary through the *Annual Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading* (Weintraub, 1988-1994). We have also reviewed such works as the *Handbook of Reading Research*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 (Pearson, Barr, Kamil & Mosenthal, 1984; Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal & Pearson, 1991) and the current *Theoretical Processes and Processes of Reading*, Fourth Edition (Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994). Much of what we know for sure can be found here, but so is much of what we know, but not for sure. Can we really rely on scientific evidence to answer all of the practical questions and dilemmas we must solve in our lives as professional literacy teacher educators. I think not! Are these resources helpful in learning how we have evolved to what we know and don't know for sure at this time? You bet!

Others have also commented on the amount of scientific evidence to be gleaned from the evolving research literature on reading. For example, Otto (1994, p. 316) also in response to Stanovich (1993/1994), stated: "People who study people are never going to discover immutable laws that govern human behavior—some better-than-chance guesses maybe, but no immutable laws." He goes on to place in perspective much of the available research literature:

> Never mind that what the research generally says is simply that chances are that certain outcomes may be obtained under certain prescribed conditions that almost certainly can't be controlled either in actual classrooms or on the actual street. In other words, the "scientific" evidence might, under the best of circumstances, provide a credible basis for making a tentative list. (p. 316)

It is also interesting that Stanovich often writes and publishes in such an evocative way, or format, that it engenders debate or responses. For example, while our Problems Court presentations at the American Reading Forum in December 1994 were prompted by Stanovich (1993/1994), Grundin (1994) was also moved to respond, which brought forth a response by Stanovich (1994b). This interesting exchange focused on the specific research studies used by each to support their respective perspectives on the role of scientific study and its value when applied to the process of how students learn to read and what happens to them while they're involved in this process. These issues included Stanovich's (1986, 1993/1994) work describing the "Matthew Effects" in reading and his focus on the role of phonemic awareness and its role in evolving literacy acquisition processes (Stanovich, 1980, 1991, 1992, 1993/1994; Stanovich, Nathan & Vala-Rossi, 1986). Another issue briefly debated in this exchange involved brain functioning as it relates to the process of reading acquisition, especially the way in which processes of word recognition and the processes of comprehension interact separately and/or integrate holistically during the process of reading. Both cite scientific support for their differing perspectives. Caine and Caine (1991) is another interesting and helpful discussion of brain functioning as it relates to teaching.

Two other recent debates involving Stanovich and others were found. West, Stanovich and Mitchell (1993) reported a study in which they identified readers or non-readers in airports and speculated not only about the effect of exposure to print on vocabulary size and cultural knowledge but also about its role in theories of individual differences in cognitive development. Taylor (1994) responded by raising questions about the relevance of the testing devices, philosophical perspectives of the approach to research, and the statistical procedures that were employed. Taylor (1994) stated, "The critique is offered in the spirit of debate to encourage academic conversations across paradigms" (p. 176). Stanovich's and West's (1994) response was brief and pointed.

Another exchange occurred recently in the *Educational Researcher* between Stanovich and Sternberg (1994). The respective titles of the articles summarize the issue: "Reconceptualizing intelligence: Dysrationalia as an intuition pump" (Stanovich, 1994a) and "What if the construct of dysrationalia were an example of itself?" (Sternberg, 1994). Stanovich (1994a) stated, "... Dysrationalia is the inability to think and behave rationally despite adequate intelligence" (p. 11). Stanovich (1994a) continued, "As argued above, rational thought is a more encompassing construct than the constellation of cognitive capacities that constitute psychometric intelligence" (p. 18). In response, Sternberg (1994), after indicating that the construct needs better conceptualization among other contextual referents, stated:

> In the real world, few problems truly lend themselves to the kind of deductive (rational) reasoning we learn in logic classes. The vast majority of problems are inductive, so that arguments can be stronger or weaker, but not logically valid or invalid. I am afraid

> that Stanovich has fallen in a trap—that of labeling people as "dysrational" who have beliefs that he does not accept. And therein lies frightening potential for misuse. And if you disagree with me, off with your head. Here, it's a joke. Historically, it's not.
>
> In sum, at an intuitive level I like much of what Stanovich has to say. He's got intriguing and exciting ideas, and its fun to read them. And I trust my intuitions. But if Stanovich prefers the logical analysis, well, off with his head too! (p. 23)

I also like much of what Stanovich has to say. What challenges us as teachers of reading educators is finding practical ways to distill the valuable nuggets of what we know for sure from that which we think we know put forward by many authorities and prepare our beginning reading teachers to continue on a path of separating this out for themselves in thoughtful and reflective ways as they create their own professional operational definitions of what it's all about in enhancing literacy. Hopefully, in their careers, they'll be able to contribute a few nuggets to both the evolving professional research and the students whose lives they will have a chance to enrich.

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Bernie's "A Reaction to Keith E. Stanovich's Romance and Reality"

As I re-read Stanovich's essay I found myself reacting to two of his main points. One was the idea that we must let scientific evidence answer questions about the reading process, and the other was that phonics must have a role in whole language classrooms. I disagree with Stanovich's strong assertion that we must rely on scientific evidence to answer questions about the reading process. I believe that he places too much faith in the "scientific testing" of questions about the nature of the reading process. I am not convinced that scientific testing will produce lasting truths about ways all children learn to read. I also believe that instruction can not stand still while we debate whose science to believe. Teachers must rely on their own knowledge, good judgment, and common sense to guide many of their instructional practices.

What I really like about Stanovich's essay is his convincing argument regarding the value of teaching and learning about phonics or phonological awareness. He suggests that the whole language movement must allow for the role phonics may play in helping some children learn to read. After acknowledging the value of many of the features of whole language, he goes on to caution educators to be realistic and pragmatic regarding introducing phonics to students in need of such instruction. He states that:

> In holding to an irrationally extreme view on the role of phonics in reading education—for failing to acknowledge that some children do not discover the alphabetic principle on their own and need systematic direct instruction on the alphabetic principle, phonological analysis, and alphabetic coding—whole language proponents threaten all of their legitimate accomplishments (p. 285).

As I read this essay I thought that it might be a benchmark by which to gauge a change in the swing of the pendulum in reading instruction. I thought that this essay might cause many teachers in whole language classrooms and the International Reading Association to gradually shift toward a reality of what works in helping students learn to read. In this regard, Stanovich talks of his belief in teachers when he states, that he is confident that teachers will find a middle way between the rhetorical blasts and political posturing of our field.

Has there been such a shift? Since Stanovich's essay (it would be impossible to say because of it) it appears to me that some of the romance has faded from the whole language movement and reality is gaining a foothold in many whole language classrooms. In the February/March 1994 issue of *Reading Today*, Susan Mandel Glazer (1995), the president of IRA, in an essay titled "Do I have to give up phonics to be a whole language teacher?" acknowledges this growing concern about the role of phonics in whole language classrooms and a need to find a middle ground. In an attempt to lead IRA membership to seek a middle ground she stated:

> Our association is large, and it welcomes many points of view about teaching and learning. Taking sides can only lead to further strife and discomfort for the consumers, the children. It is important, therefore, to structure your responses to this unnecessary battle so that the "parts" results in a unified "whole" with one major goal: to provide teaching and learning experiences that make a difference for children (p. 3).

The president of IRA is to be applauded in her efforts to focus the debate on the reality of helping children learn to read. However, as I look at the 1995 International Reading Association's Pre-Convention Institutes with titles like: "The Joy of Authentic Spelling"; "What a Wonderful World of Literacy"; "Share the Joy: Connecting Young Adult Readers with Literature" and "Storytelling: A Festival of Joy" it appears to me that there is still an awful lot of "romance" being advocated as reading instruction.

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Bernie makes a pitch for taking a "balanced" approach to teaching (or to nurturing the learning) of early reading. Sensible stance, I think. There's way too much inclination to pick sides and, then, to exchange insults in this reading education business.

Otto Interjects

(Oh yes . . . I also agree with Bernie's view on the IRA Pre-Convention Institute titles. Sounds like an excursion into LaLa Land. But that's just between you and me.)

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Roger's "The Possibility of Knowledge and Reality Without Science"

I remember very distinctly sitting on the screened deck, off the living room of our rented condo at the Sundial, looking out into the night. The stars twinkle and the sound of the waves crashing on the shore put me in the mood for a walk. As I contemplate going for a walk on the beach, Gus and Ken burst through the condo's back door. I glance in their direction as they jabber at each other. The noise of their voices masks their words. Ken is carrying a copy of the new *Reading Teacher* (*RT*) (December 1993/January 1994). I hear Gus say something about Stanovich taking the reading establishment to task. All the noisy clatter disturbs my tranquil viewing of the stars and my listening to the sounds of the waves break on the not-to-distant shore. After what seems like a life time, the loud talking ceases. Gus disappears and Ken joins me on the deck carrying the *Reading Teacher*. Ken pulls up a chair and starts to settle down. I ask, "What's all the commotion about?" Ken responds by asking me if I have read the Stanovich essay in the new *Reading Teacher*. I say, "No!" Ken mumbles something like, "What Stanovich has to say is going to set the reading establishment tongues-a-wagging." I infer from Ken's comment that I should read the Stanovich's essay.

Now, Ken is a mild-mannered man and he isn't often prone to agitation or exaggeration. My curiosity is piqued. I wonder, what could possibly get Gus and Ken so agitated? I ask Ken if I may take a look at the *Reading Teacher* he is still cradling in his hands. Ken jumps up from his chair, tosses me the *Reading Teacher* and disappears into the condo living quarters. I locate the page number of Stanovich's essay in the table of contents and turn to the beginning of the essay. I skim the first few pages and conclude that nothing in Stanovich's essay is earth-shattering. I cannot understand why Gus and Ken are so agitated with Stanovich. What am I missing? My attention returns to the sounds of the night waves as they beckon me to take a walk on the beach. I bounce from my chair with thc *Reading Teacher* in hand, and I walk into the condo to find Ken sitting on the edge of his bed ready to make a telephone call. I place the *Reading Teacher* on the nightstand, and tell Ken I am walking to the Sundial store for a Dove Bar and then down the length of the beach.

The next time the Stanovich essay is brought to my attention is in early February when Wayne sends me a copy of the problems-court proposal he has written for the 1994 ARF Conference. I read Wayne's carefully worded description, ". . . one assumes—one hopes—that Stanovich's essay will provoke erudite discussion, scholarly debates, vitrolic attacks, starry-eyed endorsements, and—one trusts—a few knock-down-drag-out brawls in public places." I wonder aloud, "Stanovich? What am I missing?" I read Wayne's proposal further, and I admit I am taken by his use of prose. Suddenly, as I read the last paragraph enclosed in parenthesis, I am astounded by the reality of the words. There are five sentences in the parentheses but the sentence that stands out is, "But insofar as Stanovich's view of 'scientific evidence' as it relates to reading instruction is concerned, Stanovich is full of . . ." I'll let you, the reader, fill in the ellipsis.

I put the proposal down and began to search for my copy of the December 1993/January 1994 *Reading Teacher*. I locate the journal and turn to the Stanovich essay. I read the entire essay. My response is no different than before. "What's all the clamor?" Three of my colleagues draw my attention to the Stanovich essay. I skimed the essay once and now I have read the entire essay. I remain puzzled by all the attention and fuss my colleagues give Stanovich's essay.

Here is another "Distinguished Educator," as identified by the bold white letters on a black background at the top of the *Reading Teacher* article, proclaiming his value as a researcher, taking jabs at those who believe differently than he does, and making some sort of inane comments about scientific evidence. The essay content offers no new revelations. I begin to wonder about Wayne's use of "erudite discussions, scholarly debates, vitriolic attacks . . ." I begin to convince myself that I am missing some hidden message in Stanovich's essay.

I put the essay away. As conference programs and journals from various reading education organizations and societies begin to arrive at my home in the months following February, I look for responses to Stanovich's essay. I find no responses. In fact, I read no mention of Stanovich's essay in any of my professional materials. Usually, Wayne is pretty accurate in his predictions about articles that will inspire our reading education colleagues. But, for eleven months the only reference to the Stanovich essay I see is when the ARF program arrives and I see my name listed as part of a group scheduled to discuss Stanovich's essay.

As the late November days begin to approach early December, I read and reread Stanovich's essay. I write notes. I focus my attention on the last section of the essay, "The connecting thread: Science." A letter arrives from Wayne reminding the problems-court participants to read Stanovich's article and to be prepared "to react to Stanovich's position . . ." I wonder what my colleagues can possibly say? I convince myself that nothing very revolutionary can be said.

The time arrives for the problems-court session to begin. Usually an hour or so before the session, those of us participating in the problems-court get together and share a bit of what we intend to say. Not this time! As Wayne, Gus and I walk to the conference room together, Wayne wonders aloud whether or not anyone will attend our session.

We enter the conference room and to our surprise about twenty people are sitting in a circle of chairs. Wayne begins the session with a brief review of the proposal. Then, each presenter says a few words, and a few people in the audience offer comments. The comments frequently pique the interest of others. The discussion is mild and not very erudite or scholarly. One individual makes a starry-eyed endorsement, but the word that keeps returning to my memory is "reality."

The title of Stanovich's essay is, "Romance and Reality." Being a cynic, the only romance that I can infer is that Stanovich is very smitten by his own research and success. I visualize Stanovich standing before this audience gloating about his research successes. He has a smug look on his face as he informs the audience that he has taken the opportunity to write the essay and to place himself at the center of attention as regards to scientific reading research. He cites the work of notable reading experts and other educators as proof that his own work is important. His tone is one of authority. I stop my day-dream and refocus on the words of the audience. I am disheartened by the apparent romance the participants have with Stanovich's work. The audience members do not raise any objections or many questions about Stanovich's essay. They allow Stanovich to direct them to what he thinks is important. The problems-court discussion wanes.

This is not a criticism of Stanovich's research or the audience participants for their reaction. For the most part, I believe much of Stanovich's work is meritorious. I do object, however, to Stanovich taking seven and one-half pages of double columns of print to extol his own virtues. As for the audience, the essay is just not compelling enough to raise concerns. A few participants do make comments about Stanovich's position related to science, but the depth of the comments are innocuous and superficial.

Although the audience does not have much to say about Stanovich's notion of scientific evidence, there is potential for controversy in the position Stanovich takes. Writing about science and reality is one misstep Stanovich makes. Instead of ending his essay with the rehashing of issues from the Great Debate, he tries to tie-off his essay by cloaking his remarks in a discussion of the virtues of science. Science for Stanovich is reality, and only science determines what is real. This the crux of the controversy.

First, Stanovich fails to write his definition of science. Is "science" one thing? Is science pursued in only one way? Near the end of his article, Stanovich appears to imply, although he does not explicitly state, that truth is only accomplished through the use of the scientific method. Stanovich claims the scientific method is objective. Therefore, Stanovich's position is that science is objective. Consequently, for Stanovich the only way to acquire knowledge is through the use of the scientific method. What does Stanovich's position do to the knowledge we gain about people, their customs, artifacts, and mores from the fields of anthropology and sociology? Evidently discoveries by Malinowski, Mead, and their colleagues in sociology and anthropology mean little to Stanovich. Social and cultural discoveries must not be real for Stanovich. By taking this position, Stanovich repudiates entire branches of knowledge.

Further, Stanovich fails to state what constitutes scientific evidence. He compounds this omission by claiming that only science can reveal knowledge when he states, "Education's well known susceptibility to the 'authority syndrome' stems from its tacit endorsement of a personalistic view of knowledge acquisition: the belief that knowledge resides within particular individuals who then dispense it to others" (p. 287). This is exactly what Stanovich is doing in his entire essay! He goes so far as to dichotomize his research into results people like and results people don't like. By providing the dichotomy for the readers, Stanovich is personalizing his research. He personalizes his research further by engaging in political innuendo throughout the "Great Debate again" part of his essay. What Stanovich really says is that people who don't like my type of research don't understand science and don't practice science.

Stanovich states further, "What science actually accomplishes with its conception of publicly verifiable knowledge is the democratization of knowledge, an outcome that frees practitioners and researchers from slavish dependence on authority . . ." (p. 287). Stanovich's proclivity, however, is to link his research to those individuals who are acknowledged as reading authorities. He drops names of prominent reading educators, thereby demonstrating his slavish dependence on authority. Also, the knowledge Stanovich reveals is based in the subjective world. The knowledge is subjective simply because Stanovich desires to identify that knowledge. Additionally, the knowledge he discovers is not accessible to all. Who reads the *Reading Teacher*? The last time I looked the *RT* is not available on my local book shop racks. The *RT* is published for a specific select audience, not just anyone. The mere fact that Stanovich uses highly selective and professional language to describe his research activities is an indication that he is not writing for the common man. All knowledge, therefore, is not available to everyone. Stanovich's position smacks of elitism, not democracy.

Stanovich's scientific criteria for evaluating knowledge adds to the controversy. His first criterion is that scientific knowledge is published in refereed journals. This criterion is laughable and most depressing if Stanovich believes this is one of the only ways knowledge becomes less personalized and less authoritative. Who makes up the membership of the editorial boards of journals? Authorities? Not in many cases. "In-crowd" friends, colleagues belonging to the good-old-person (things have changed a little) network serve on reading journal editorial boards. Additionally, reading journal editorial board memberships have much overlap, thereby limiting the opportunities for many worthy professionals to serve the profession. This network of editorial board members keeps a tight control on whose study or article gets published. The same argument can be made for acceptance of conference proposals. Another discovery that makes Stanovich's position laughable is that some journal board members do not entertain ideas of accepting studies that use alternative research methodologies. Some journals still accept only studies with stated hypotheses. Back in the late 1980s, I submitted a qualitative study to a very reputable educational journal. The manuscript was returned with a letter of rejection. The rejected manuscript contained the simple admonition that the study did not have a stated hypothesis. So much for peer review! How many of you work in research areas where other people are investigating similar phenomena? Have you had your paper or proposal rejected because the reviewer is working on something similar and doesn't want your competition? Again, so much for peer review!

This is reality and not a negative view of peer review. I fully support the peer review process. I, however, acknowledge that there are flaws in the peer review system. Too frequently, useful findings from studies never see the light of day or end up in journals with minimal readership. As a result, knowledge is not accessible to everyone. Stanovich is at the top of his professional, and he probably does not experience being slighted. So when he states his position that only scientific knowledge is published in journals, his vision is rather short-sighted; but this is Stanovich's reality.

A second criterion Stanovich states is that the duplication of results by other investigators means that knowledge is scientific. Stanovich makes a big assumption here. Who says the methods and procedures of similar studies are appropriately employed? Again, because Stanovich fails to define what he means by "scientific," a discussion about methods or procedures is not possible. Is there more than one type of science and more than one way to do science? Investigators reading research often find themselves comparing apples and oranges. For example, the statistical procedure of meta-analysis allows investigators to compare different studies about the same topic. Frequently, investigators cull similar studies from the comparison because of methodological inconsistencies, apples and orange. Duplication of a study does not mean the quality of the study is maintained. Contextual factors are not easily controlled. A blanket statement that duplication studies provide investigators with scientific knowledge is simply not true.

Another problem concerning studies that duplicate results is that there is little professional appeal to engage in replication studies. Professional prestige is not often accorded individuals who replicate others' work. Advancement in the profession cannot be achieved based solely on replicating other individual's work. Stanovich evidently realizes that since he does not report on replication studies.

Stanovich states a final criterion for scientific knowledge. There must be consensus within a research community on whether or not a critical mass of studies point toward a particular conclusion. How would Stanovich handle contradictory critical masses? Or does he just ignore them? How would Stanovich handle a case like this: Reading investigators, who produce a critical mass of studies, conclude that a reading curriculum focusing on a subskill approach attains a high degree of success with students. At the same time, another group of reading investigators produce another critical mass of studies and conclude that the language experience approach allows a different group of students to have success as well. Is one critical mass scientific and the other not? Is one set of studies reality and the other set no? Would Stanovich maintain that there can be only one critical mass?

Stanovich admits to one reality, but his reality does not include the universe of knowledge and events. His reality admits only science. Additionally, he claims that science is objective and that knowledge is discovered only through scientific investigations. According to Stanovich, ideas that are subjective add nothing to our knowledge of the world. This is a very narrow view of the world and goes a long way toward exacerbating the problems we face in the discovery of knowledge. What Stanovich claims is that only science is real, your intuitions, beliefs, and feelings are not real. Emotion has no place in science and in the discovery of knowledge . . .

As we return to the problems-court session the participants do not disagree about much. Only one point, the peer review idea, receives much attention. The participants do acknowledge that the professional peer review system has flaws and that some good research does not receive appropriate exposure.

Two reasons come to mind why Stanovich's article is not being discussed, debated, and argued over. First, Stanovich's position, at the present time, is so contrary to what is going on in the field of reading education research that his colleagues consider the issues Stanovich raises not worth discussing, debating and arguing. Investigators find that there is more to the process of research than the traditional scientific method. Second, readers view Stanovich's essay as a self-aggrandizing effort, not worthy of response. My colleagues, Ken and Gus, made lots of noise that distant night in December 1993, for no apparent reasons. Stanovich's article does not have the tongues of the reading establishment wagging. Reality must not be scientifically based for all reading educators. Maybe science does take different forms. Wayne's initial comment in the ARF proposal sums up perfectly and succinctly the Stanovich position about scientific evidence: but insofar as Stanovich's view of scientific evidence as it relates to reading education is concerned, Stanovich is full of . . . Again, I'll let you, the reader, fill in the ellipsis.

* * * * * * * * * *

Otto Interjects

Oooops—Roger picked up on a little parenthetical addendum that I'd included with the proposal that I sent to Cindy. I chose not to include it here (above), but now it looks like the cat's out of the bag. So okay; I *did* have an opinion about Stanovich's view of science *before* our problems court session.

Maybe Roger missed a couple of the potshots at Stanovich that Ken cites in his paper; but, by and large, he's right about the big yawn Stanovich's *Reading Teacher* article got. And Roger certainly makes it clear *why* he thinks that happened—or failed to happen. And I think that he (Roger) accurately reflects the tone of the discussion at the problems court session.

Afterglow

So there you have it: The story of a Problems Court session. In this particular instance, I think it's clear that there was no "verdict," no definitive resolution. But I think it's clear, too, that the session *did* turn out to be an occasion for sharing some old stories and for evoking some new ones. Like I said at the outset, that's okay with me. Personally, I think there ought to be lots more occasions for just such exchanges and evocations at (and as a result of) professional meetings.

But whether "Problems Court" is an appropriate designation for what actually goes on (or at least what went on at this one) at the sessions is clearly open to question. Frankly, I think the formalistic tone of *problems court*—aside from being misleading—may be a turn off to many prospective participants. Who needs to participate in—or to witness—still another slugfest between opposing sides?

Maybe what's needed—if indeed, ARF members value taking program time to exchange stories—is a different designation, a new category of scheduled sessions. One that invites conversation about an issue, with no promise of (or press for) resolution. A place where we can talk and listen and maybe once in a while, if things go well, modify some of our personal stories.

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The American Reading forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for reading education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of reading research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
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- To ensure that in the field of reading no idea is too bold or new to be given a hearing, and none too old to be given reconsideration.

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To achieve its goals, ARF sponsors a meeting each year during early December. The program consists of the common conference session formats (e.g., paper sessions, major addresses, and symposia), as well as alternative formats to those generally employed by organizations in the field of reading. To enhance the opportunity for participants' interaction, the American Reading Forum encourages a variety of formats for its sessions. A "Topical Issues Forum," a "Continuous Dialogue Session," and "Mentorships Sessions" are a few of the formats that ARF considers as ways to allow issues and topics to be discussed in depth by those who attend the annual meeting.

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